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Against the Current

Simple Chapters
from
A Complex Life

By
EDWARD A. STEINER
Author of "On the Trail of the Immigrant," Etc., etc.

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To
President John Hanson Thomas Main,
the embodiment of the ideals of
Grinnell College
who,
although of different race and lineage
is to me a friend and brother;
I dedicate this book
on the tenth anniversary of our first meeting

Foreword

BEFORE I could speak one language, I cried in three, and the first words I uttered were in a tongue so foreign to my later life, that I have forgotten all but a few phrases which cling to me in spite of my neglect of them.

I played with the children of three distinct races and loved those best who hated my people most.

My soul awakened in the tumult of three alien faiths and grew into maturity in the belief furthest from that of my fathers. My mind struggled first with the mature if stagnant wisdom of Hebrew teachers, who treated children as if they were sages and sages as if they were children; but it escaped from that bondage into the untrammelled wisdom of the Greeks, their successors, then into that of the Germans, and later became reasonably disciplined under Slavic and Anglo-Saxon teachers.

Born in one country, I lived my early boyhood in another, my young manhood elsewhere and my later life on this side of the great sea—crossing and recrossing so often that I am nowhere

an alien; although by my love of liberty and my faith in its spirit of fair play, I am a loyal American.

It is my calling to study races and groups, to discover in the individual what these have bequeathed to him, and having done this fairly successfully for others, I am now trying to do it for myself. I am searching the background of this complex life of mine, my childhood and boyhood, trying to discover just how much I owe to race and how much to my varying environments.

I have written this book for four classes of people. First, for those who like myself wish to discover in these informal, yet, I trust, genuine sketches, material for the study of race psychology.

Second, for those who may like to have their faith in the unity of the human race strengthened, by concrete examples.

Third, for those who will find pleasure in reading the story of so complex a child life with all its tragedies and comedies which, at the time they occurred, seemed least significant when they were most full of meaning and most tragic when they were of least consequence.

Lastly, I am writing for those who, like myself, have struggled against the limitations imposed upon their faith and vision by narrow, racial ties, who believe themselves debtors to

every race, who believe that their forefathers are all those who bequeathed to the world great thoughts to grapple with and fair visions to realize—whether their dust rests in the cave of the fields of Machpelah, the crowded Père la Chaise or beneath simple headstones in the churchyards of the Puritans.

Without belittling the heritage left them by their race or people, or the obligation to share their lot of shame or ignominy, I trust that what I have written will enable such to ally themselves with the Son of Man and say with the same modesty and the same courage as He said it: "Behold My mother and My brethren!" . . . "For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother."

E. A. S.

Grinnell, Iowa.

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Against the Current

I

HOW I GOT MY NAME

THE servants called me "Uri." When they petted me or wanted some favour, they called me "Urinku," and when they were angry, which was not seldom, they cried, "Uri!" giving the i a short, sharp sound. This made me very angry, for at best I did not like the name, which wasn't my name anyway.

When I asked my nurse why she insisted upon using it, she said, "Because it means awake, and you have kept us awake ever since you were born." Then I hated the name still more.

One day—I think I was not yet four—I was brought to judgment before my mother for having scratched and beaten a young servant girl because she had called me by that hated nickname. My mother never could punish me, for whenever I offended, which was often, I threw my arms around her and kissed her, and the

rising anger quickly vanished. Unconsciously this grew to be a trick which I knew would save me and I practiced it on this occasion. As I held my arms around my mother's neck and pressed kisses upon her responsive lips, she said, "I will tell you why the servants call you Uri, if you promise that you will not grow angry if they call you by that name."

Then she told me in that sweet, low voice which never had a harsh note, and which I shall never hear again in this world: "Before you were born, the sky was red at night for months; a comet, which is a star with a long tail, travelled through the heavens, and the peasants were so frightened that they did not leave their isbas at night, and the inns were silent and deserted. The witch"—and here I began to shudder; for she was still living and had frightened me many a time—"the witch went about through the street, crying: 'There will be war! There will be war!'" In the Slavic language the word for war is strangely euphonious—Voyna.

"Bude Voyna! Bude Voyna!" And mother imitated the voice of the witch so that I shook from fear; for war held unknown terrors and the sight of a gun always threw me into a panic. To this day I feel something of childhood's dread at sight of a gun or pistol.

"It wasn't long before soldiers came," mother

continued—"and they blew the trumpet at the town hall and all the able-bodied men had to go to be examined. I wept day and night because your father was young and strong and the trumpet called him away from me and from four little children and from you who were not yet born.

"Many people who had money buried it in the garden or hid it in their bake-ovens and much of it was lost or destroyed; for numbers of the men were killed and when their wives started fires in the bake-ovens, the money went up the chimneys in smoke.

"'Just let them come!' your father said, 'just let those Prussians come, and we will wring their necks like chickens!'

"No, your father did not have to go away to war, the war came to us. One night the sky looked as if it were burning up and the stars were like fiery coals. A haze hung around them as if each star had a halo. The witch ran through the street as if possessed, crying: 'Bude Voyna! Bude Voyna!' and before morning, the battle came nearer and nearer to us. Bullets flew through the window-panes and the peasants' straw-thatched isbas were set on fire. It was a terrible day and a frightful night.

"Your father was with the wounded and the dying and he came home in the gray morning with his hands and his garments covered with

blood. The next day the war was over. The soldiers were gone and the Prussians were the victors.

"Then again the witch ran through the street, crying: 'There will be sickness! There will be sickness!' and evil smells rose from the ground and men were smitten by the cholera. Your father went out again to care for the sick and the dying; one evening when he came home he himself was a victim of the disease and in the morning he was dead.

"When autumn came the cholera was over and again the witch went through the street crying: 'There will be famine! There will be famine!' The poor had no bread. The little flour which the king sent them, they mixed with bran or ground roots or even sawdust. To this day the peasants count time as so many years before the famine or after it. A hard winter it was for every one. We lived in constant dread; for robber bands were passing through the town at night and many Jewish homes were broken into and plundered.

"One morning, just as the beadle was going from house to house, waking the people to go to the synagogue—striking the door with a hammer and crying: 'Uri, Uri!' 'Awake, Awake!'—just as he came to our door, you were born, and ever since you have been called Uri. Of course you received another name, the name of your

sainted father, but Uri seems to cling to you. Remember that when I see you, you awaken much sorrow and much joy. When the servants call you Uri, you must not be angry with them."

I remember the story almost word for word, as mother told it to me; for it was the time when my little brain began to retain impressions, and, moreover, mother insisted upon my apologizing to the servant girl whom I had scratched and beaten, and an apology was not to my liking.

After that a certain kind of sadness crept over me which I could never quite shake off. An intense fear of guns gripped me. I remember this well, for the next day an Hungarian shepherd came into the kitchen and brought his old blunderbuss with him. Old Istvan had fierce moustaches and coal black eyes; he wore strange trousers which looked like divided skirts, and a sheepskin coat with the head of the sheep hanging over his shoulder; but I know it was the gun that I most dreaded, for I cried and shook from fear until Istvan carried it out of the house.

I never forgot what my mother told me about my name, and I did not grow angry again at the servants for calling me Uri. Even now there is a hut in the Carpathians where one of our servants of that period lives. When last I went to see her and told her who I was, a smile spread over her care-worn face and she said as

she drew me close to her, "Muy Urinku." She was the girl I beat and scratched, and as she recalled that incident, she said, "Alle bilie ste hundsut"—"But you were a little rascal."

II

THE PERIOD OF RACE UNCONSCIOUSNESS

UP to my fifth year I did not know that I was not like my playmates. Democratic, as all children are, I played with the boys and girls belonging to the peasant families living in our neighbourhood. I visited them in their wretched and ill-smelling homes, and was eager to help them with their field work, but was often carried away bodily by my older sisters, who could not understand why I should behead cabbages for the cross-eyed, drunken day-labourer whose son Martin was my age and my boon companion. I assisted in many a pig killing, much to the disgust of my wiser and race-conscious brothers and sisters, and at one time I ate a piece of pork. I realized that it must have been a dreadful thing to do when I had my mouth washed with strong soap. Once I was caught chewing a piece of bacon rind which I carried in my pocket, and the punishment was so severe that for a long time I found it inconvenient to sit down. I never cultivated a distaste for pork, and in later years I heard my elder sister say that she believed this was due to the fact that I had been vaccinated with virus taken from the

arm of a Gentile boy and that my blood became contaminated.

Be that as it may, I always enjoyed the society of the Gentile boys and girls. In the spring, I made whistles with them, and I knew the Slavic chant which would evolve a sweet-toned instrument from a willow twig. I even made willow switches at Easter time and went about with the Gentile boys who were bought off from beating the girls, by their gifts of coloured eggs.

At the tender age of six, the boy, to whom I was related by vaccination, became a "Mendic," that is, a helper in the household of the Lutheran pastor. He rang the bells for church and carried the cross at funerals. For these services he received his schooling free and such board as fell from the pastor's table. I think I rang the bells for Christian worship as often as he rang them. Once I polished the communion set, pumped the organ for the schoolmaster many a time, and took my full share of those pleasant tasks, as behooves one who finds that his brother has too much to do, even if he be a brother only by vaccination.

I recall delightful springs at that period, when I went far a-field with the Gentile boys; and when everything had its young I followed a flock of geese and goslings to the meadow, in the centre of which stood a Roman Catholic chapel shaded by a huge beech tree. The girl who had charge of the geese, and whose assistant I became, al-

though older, was also in that blissful state of race unconsciousness—and did not know that she, a Magyar and a Roman Catholic, was different from me.

The boys teased me for going to the meadow with the girl, but as I recall it now it was the fluffy little goslings that drew me after her, although it may have been the girl, for I early developed a liking for the opposite sex.

I did some mild gambling with buttons; marbles had either not been invented or had not yet penetrated into our stage of civilization. I also remember getting myself red all over with brick dust; for there was a game, not unknown in this country, I believe, which required the cutting of six cubes out of brick and then carefully polishing them by means of a flat stone and the free application of saliva.

I am not sure that the Gentile children who played with me were as unconscious of their race and religion as I was, or that they were unconscious of my own. I suspect that as they were usually a little older than I, they knew more than I knew, and that some of them, at least, served me for the "loaves and fishes." I had a ten o'clock breakfast of bread and butter—a huge slice from a loaf of rye bread more than half as large as a wagon wheel and spread thick with sweet butter and a few kernels of coarse salt. The Gentile boys had big mouths and big ap-

petites and they never had a second breakfast of bread and butter.

Many a time I was caught purloining Sabbath cakes which I carried among the unholy Gentile groups of children who, although they may have been ignorant of my Jewish faith, were very conscious that the food which came from my home had a peculiarly delicate flavour unknown in the coarse fare to which they were accustomed.

I suffered much because of my friendly attitude towards these unbelievers, and one day, for so small an offense as dividing all the Sabbath apple cake among my confrères, I received such a severe beating from my older brother, whose temper was quick, whose hand was strong and whose aim was unerring, that I decided to run away from home. Sobbing from anger and pain, I ran through the garden, across the bridge, into the street in which the barns were located and out upon the highway leading to the town of Maria's Bosom, a place of pilgrimage for devout Catholics and of more than local fame.

It was the season for pilgrimages, the harvest being over, and I had not walked far enough to repent of my rash decision when I heard the solemn chant of pilgrims. Stepping aside to let them pass, I discovered that they were our townsfolk who were going to pay their annual visit to the Mother of God at Maria's Bosom. Staff in hand, old and young passed me, solemnly sing-

ing hymns to the Virgin. I suppose there were more than four hundred pilgrims. I was standing under some lilac bushes and was not noticed. Following the marchers were several wagons which carried the aged and infirm, the children and the provisions. On one of the wagons sat the goose girl, the black-eyed Magyar maiden with whom I was supposed to be in love.

"Come," she called when she saw me, "come and visit the Mother of God." With some difficulty I climbed onto the high wagon and sat down beside my comrade; and neither she nor I knew that it was wrong for me to go on a visit to the Mother of God at Maria's Bosom.

III

THE DAWN OF RACE CONSCIOUSNESS

THE town of Maria's Bosom was a little larger than the one in which I lived and was famous for its healing waters, drawn from a spring in which the face of the Virgin was to be seen. This water cured all manner of diseases, and many grateful pilgrims had enriched the monastery in whose centre the spring bubbled. The town itself drew a fair share of revenue from this sacred fame; there were inns for all sorts of pocketbooks and for all conditions of men, and there were sellers of honey cakes who fashioned their sweet wares in various symbolic and saintly forms. The goose girl bought the Twelve Apostles and she ate six and I ate six without either of us suffering serious consequences.

Booth upon booth crowded the wall which encircled the great church whose twin towers rose high above its red tiled roof; but I fear that my eyes were holden by the gewgaws offered for sale in the booths, and that neither the architecture of the church nor the solemn service within, made much impression upon me. The pool, with its healing waters and the throng of

pilgrims who dipped their sores in it, did sadden and sicken me, and to this day I never see a wound without having that scene recalled to my mind.

The goose girl being at the base of supplies, I did not suffer hunger nor did I feel any home-sickness, for there was much to be seen and my mind was diverted. When the pilgrims formed to go home, however, I began to realize that I had run away and that most likely the consequences would be equally unpleasant whether I kept on running away or returned home. Probably I decided that running away was not such fun as I anticipated and that my brother had been punished enough by my absence, for I remember being seated by the goose girl homeward bound when the band began to play, first solemnly as is fitting for a well-behaved brass band when it returns from a pilgrimage; then it quickened its action and played a military march quite out of keeping with the occasion. Besides the healing waters at Maria's Bosom, wine flowed freely and the musicians were evidently in a happy mood after their libations.

The driver of the wagon where I sat with the goose girl was not at all cordial when he discovered me among the jugs of water that were being carried back to the sick.

"How much are you going to pay me, you little Jew, for taking you home?" he demanded.

The word Jew in the Slavic language is *Schid*, and it had a contemptuous, menacing sound. I protested that I was not a *Schid* and before I knew it, he took me by the back of the neck and threw me from the wagon; then he whipped his horses while I, limping and crying, started in pursuit, which I soon saw to be fruitless, as the procession moved rapidly away from me.

Seated in the ditch by the road, wishing with all my heart, no doubt, that I had not run away, I heard the rumbling of a cart and horse. Looking up, I discovered on the cart my Uncle Isaac, my guardian, who had evidently started in search of me. My uncle was not on the best terms with my mother, for she was not satisfied by the way in which he administered our estate, and he was even less satisfied by the unorthodox way in which he thought she was bringing me up—her youngest and very much spoiled child. In consequence I did not like him and was always afraid of him; for he had an unpleasant habit of frequently stopping me on the street and partially undressing me, to see if my mother had not forgotten to put on the sacred fringes which every Jewish boy must wear close to his body.

"Where have you been?" he cried, when he saw me.

"I have been visiting the Mother of God," I replied.

Then I remember being lifted onto the cart

most ungently, and my uncle's telling me that if my mother had brought me up right, I would not be running after the idols of the Gentiles. He prophesied a dire end to my existence and promised that from this time forth, he would take my religious training into his own hands.

I do not distinctly recall what happened when I reached home, but I can still see my mother with a candle in her hand taking me down from the cart, rejoiced to see me back ; later, as she herself undressed me and discovered on my back the marks of my brother's punishment, I could hear her weeping as I fell into a long and troubled sleep.

The next day I had to begin the study of the Hebrew alphabet, my uncle being the teacher, and a hard one indeed. Moreover, he strictly forbade my playing with the Gentile children, an injunction which I did not always obey. But inasmuch as they now called me *Schid*, in spite of my sharing my bread and butter with them more lavishly than ever, I gradually forsook their haunts. The next spring I no more made whistles, or scourges at Easter time ; neither did I follow the goslings to the pasture or sit beside the goose girl under the beech tree by the chapel.

It was a new period in my life. The days began and ended differently and all things bore a changed aspect. Every evening and every morning I had to meet my uncle in the

synagogue for prayers. He was the most pious man in the community, a descendant of Abraham Bolsover, the fragrance of whose piety still lingers in local history. My uncle had penetrated into the very heart of rabbinical Judaism. He knew much of the Talmud by heart, he could recite the prayers for all the holy days, even those for the Day of Atonement, without once looking at the prayer-book; and whenever the synagogue was without an official reader he filled the place.

I did not then appreciate his piety or the splendid tenor voice in which he recited the prayers, or the many virtues which now I know he possessed. At that period I knew him only as a hard teacher and guardian. My mind never was with the prayers which I could not understand; the discordant service did not interest me and the synagogue became a place of torture. My eyes wandered mechanically up and down the walls. I knew how many cracks they had and how many rivulets of moisture came down from where the roof had leaked. I could tell the exact number of spindles in the railing of the gallery which divided the women from the men, for I must have counted them a thousand times. Whenever my uncle caught my wandering eyes he brought me back to the prayer-book by poking me in the ribs, at times very forcibly. His own children were of

a different type. They throve on studying Hebrew; they sang with their father and knew all the pianissimos and fortissimos of the hymns of praise. And they were always held up to me as shining examples to follow, especially by my grandmother, who took great pride in them and invariably gave them the largest ginger cakes on Sabbath afternoons. That did not increase my love for her or for my cousins, or did it make me a better student of Hebrew and of the Talmud at whose threshold I was then standing. I still preferred the willows and the whistles, the goslings and the goose girl to my uncle, my grandmother, my cousins, and the Talmud.

And yet the bond between me and my former playmates was broken; for I knew I was a Jew. The Gentile boys knew it, even the geese, I thought, must know it, for the ganders seemed to hiss at me: "*Schid, Schid.*" The goose girl, the poor drunken mason's daughter—half-starved creature that she was—knew it also; although I think she remembered our childhood's friendship the longest.

IV

THE NEW TEACHER

HE was expected in the omnibus, the one public conveyance of which the town boasted and which connected us with the still far-away railroad.

Long before the old omnibus was due, boys of my age, the first Jewish children to be taught by a teacher trained and employed by the government, were out on the highway to meet it. So eager were we to behold the new master of our educational destiny that we wandered a good many miles upon the wretched highway to the Oresco Hill, famed, because at its foot passengers had to dismount, and were lucky if they did not have to help push the ungainly vehicle to the summit.

It was spring time, and having since then experienced such spring days on that spot, I can now understand why the little man who was following the omnibus looked so long through his spectacles at the encircling Carpathians. Then his glance swept the exquisite blue of the sky with its fleecy clouds and at the top of the hill he stood silent; while the omnibus slid down the steep incline with its one other passenger, the

teacher's bride, whom he had brought from a far-away German city.

I did not understand the teacher when, with his eyes still fixed on our town in the distance, he said in beautiful German: "Boys, this is a wonderful scene." I did understand that his wife was wonderfully lovely, and while I was the first one to see her, I was not the last to feel the warmth of her glance and the distinct pleasure which her smile brought to those who found favour in her eyes, and alas! they were many.

The first day in school, always an event in one's life, was remarkable to those of us to whom it meant release from the one-sided, hard and harsh Jewish school, and a real entrance into life.

Imagine what it meant to children to decipher difficult Hebrew characters without vowel points, which were finally sounded by the lips and were in a large measure meaningless and unconnected with life. Imagine such children hearing a teacher speak and teach in German, soft and musical; having the day's work open with a song, a really gladsome song about winds and flowers and blue skies and all the other things around them—things of which they had been as unconscious as if they had not existed.

There were charts with letters and pictures and at ten o'clock, before we had a chance to grow weary, a generous recess. Our teacher taught us

games and simple gymnastics; he took us to the woods and on top of the hills, revealing to us the glory of the present, much to the chagrin of my uncle to whom the past alone was sacred. Chanting his psalms, my uncle climbed Mount Zion and rejoiced in the beauty of Lebanon, but never lifted his eyes to the beauty of the Oresco Hill, and never realized that the Carpathians also were God's footstool.

The teacher had no easy time of it; neither in the school where not all his pedagogic methods were appreciated, nor out of it where they were neither appreciated nor approved. Our home was one in which his methods were both approved and appreciated, for our mother was a liberal spirit, far more cultured than learned; consequently the teacher was a frequent visitor in our home and a welcome guest at our table, sharing with us his petty trials and his great ones. His petty trials were those that every truth bringer must experience; his great trials were in his home and the first real tragedy which I experienced, I shared with him and felt as deeply in my way as he felt it in his.

In my boyhood the Jewish community was practically free from scandals arising from domestic infelicity. Although marriages were arranged by the parents with the aid of the *Schadchen*—marriage broker—the family life was regarded as sacred, and something as good as love, if not love

itself, grew with the passing years. I knew of only one divorced couple and of no woman who had borne a child out of wedlock. Changes came, however, with changes in the character of the upper class. The town had an influx of Hungarian officials vastly out of proportion to its population. These officials were the children of a bankrupt, aristocratic, landowning class, who in this way were taken care of by the government at the expense of the people's tax account and of their moral fibre.

Some sixty officials in a town of four or five thousand inhabitants could not find much to do, although the county court was located in our town. In fact, the type of officials sent us would not have done anything had there been anything to do. They brought the Hungarian gypsies with them, those purveyors of pleasure, par excellence; gambling was introduced and that which was much worse and which never comes into any community without polluting the guiltless and further polluting the guilty. The county judge was the greatest offender in all directions ; every vice which could be originated he developed and those which he could not originate he imported. No woman was safe if he set his heart upon her and he used all the powers of a judge and all the artifices of a trained courtier to gain his ends. He had no difficult task with the teacher's wife. Her husband was a small, wizened, near-sighted

Jew; the judge was a Magyar of the finest physical type, and to those who know the type, that is sufficient. Moreover, the teacher gave him the opportunity and he took it. The teacher was one of the first of the Hungarian Jews to feel the charm of the larger life, and wherever he found it possible to break down the narrow walls of Jewish social life he made the most of it. For this purpose he planned a May day celebration, to be held in the near-by forest.

The Jewish young men to whom the teacher had come as a sort of liberator, although they were too old to go to school, were drawn into the plan, which included marching to the forest in the morning, a picnic dinner and exercises by the children, to which the dignitaries were to be invited. The festivities were to end in a dance for the invited guests who were all the young officials and the judge.

It was a great day, ushered in by a cloudless, fragrant May morning. The gypsy band led the procession, followed by the gaily-clad children and a wagon load of refreshments in charge of the beadle who had a great reputation for ministering to the palate and neglecting his work in the synagogue.

On reaching the pine forest we found a clearing decorated in the national colours, a band stand and long tables for the dinner. It was a new world, out-of-doors, which opened like

Paradise to us Jewish children, shut in since our birth in a small, dusty town. We ate with ravenous appetites, went through the exercises to the satisfaction of our exacting teacher, the rabbi, the president of the congregation and the rest of the Jewish dignitaries—and as the Hungarian officials, headed by the judge, appeared, we sang the national anthem, baring our heads, a grievous offense in the eyes of the conservative Jews. Our teacher made a great speech; I still remember certain eloquent words which I then heard for the first time: "Patriotism, Fraternity, Humanity."

It was a speech that fired one's blood. He closed by calling for three cheers for the judge, after which he received the congratulations of everybody, including my orthodox uncle. Wine was passed and the judge proposed a toast to the king, another to the rabbi, one to the teacher and one to our great country; toasts enough to shake the temperate Jews somewhat out of their sober atmosphere and to carry the teacher quite off his feet. He embraced everybody, drank more and more and when the dance began it was he who led his young wife to the judge for the first waltz.

I do not know how long into the night the dance lasted; it ended scandalously. The Magyar officials taunted the Jewish youths, made the gypsies play anti-Semitic songs and finally re-

mained victors in the field, consuming the fat *kosher* geese, the no less *kosher* wine, and did not scruple to kiss the *kosher* maidens who were still half children and delighted in the attention they received.

The next day was a gloomy one at school. The teacher whipped us; he even whipped me, his favourite, until my back was blue. At recess he did not play with us; in fact, he never played with us again.

Many months after, as I was going to school, I found my way blocked by a great crowd in front of the judge's house; Jews and Gentiles alike pressed around the entrance gate in front of which stood the teacher with a bundle of pillows in his arms. His cries of anguish and the terrible curses, which he called down upon the judge, rang in my ears for weeks afterwards. He pulled the bell at the gate until he broke the wire; he beat upon the iron bars with the handle of the gate which he had wrenched from it; he broke all the windows of the house within reach, with the stones he threw, and when no one from within responded, he laid his bundle on the step and left it there.

I knew nothing then of the mystery of life, but felt the awe of it while scarcely understanding what it meant; at least I could not have explained it to any one.

I had known for some time that the teacher

was in deep trouble; in fact, I had caught a sentence here and there from my elders which hinted at a terrible disaster.

Here, then, was the tragedy. "This is your brat, yours, yours! Keep it and may it grow up to curse you and damn you as it already has cursed and damned me!"

Those were the last words I heard him speak. There was no school that day or the next or the next. Fishermen found his body upon the shores of the river where it had been washed up by the waves.

They buried him in an obscure corner of the God's Acre, with his head as near the highroad as possible. There was no public funeral for he was a suicide and there is no stone to mark his grave. Yet he is not forgotten; because he was the first man who opened for me a window into this beautiful world and who showed me the rivers and the mountains. Through him I received my first uplift towards "Patriotism, Fraternity and Humanity," and learned that those of us who believe in them must pay the price.

V

THE THREE WISE MEN

IT was a bitter winter in the valley of the Waag. Motionless in its crooked bed lay that swift river, whose roar and rush neither the drought of summer nor the cold of winter had silenced within the memory of a generation. Only the roofs of the peasants' cottages were visible above the all-conquering, drifted snow, as for days, men, women and children battled with it in the attempt to release one another from its embrace.

No one asked: "Is this a Jew's house or a Magyar's isba?" "Is it the home of a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, to which we are making a path?" The common danger broke down ancient barriers, even as the snow filled the valleys, and the frozen river united isolated shores. As the older people became one in their common danger, so the children became one in the pleasurable excitement which these changes brought into the routine of their lives.

There was no school, no church and no synagogue service, and as we coasted down great mountains of snow, piled high by the patient

toilers, we forgot the antagonisms to which so early in life we had fallen heir. I shared freely the sleds of the Gentile boys whose fathers were skillful in making them, and they shared as freely my luncheon, which the more provident Jewish home provided.

While sandwiched on a sled between two Gentile boys, one of them, my brother by vaccination, called my attention to the fact that Christmas was at hand, and that as chief choir boy, it was his prerogative to train the three wise men who go about on Christmas Eve from house to house, singing carols and gathering such gifts as may be bestowed upon the celebrants.

The boy on the back of the sled was to be one of them, and as the third boy was snow-bound in an isolated farmhouse, and not likely to be liberated before Christmas Eve, it was proposed that I should take his place. I accepted.

In a very vague way I knew the meaning of Christmas; it came in the dreariness of our winter, unrelieved by Jewish holidays, and the Christmas trees, the candles, and the happy children had long ago aroused my childish envy. Realizing that all this was not for me, I was content to see the twinkling lights, and hear the merry laughter of the children from afar, never even asking why I could not have a share in those things. Consequently it came about that

when the sled reached the bottom of the roadway and I was released from my close fellowship with the Gentile boys, I was initiated into the duties of a wise man and duly accepted the post with all its obligations. Being a Jew, the financial responsibilities of the affair were thrust upon me. These consisted of purchasing paste, pins and several sheets of gilt paper for crowns and a huge star. My room was made the studio in which the various symbols were to be designed and manufactured.

It is safe to say that I was fairly unselfish in the matter, inasmuch as I could not hope to share in the returns from this enterprise, which would be largely in food which I did not need and could not have eaten had I needed it. Of course, being a wise man and wearing a crown were in themselves compensations worthy the sacrifice I was making, which at first consisted merely in diverting a few pennies from my small allowance, but which grew beyond my calculations, the more I entered into the experiences of a wise man.

While I provided the material things, as behooved my station in life, the acolyte provided things spiritual, and in a snow cave dug by our united efforts, he taught me my part in the dramatic performance of the "Three Wise Men." Incidentally I learned how to sing a Christian hymn and had my first lesson in Latin; and of

both there were more, later in life and under less trying circumstances.

I spent the day before Christmas in feverish excitement, mumbling my part in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, as it was not safe for me to be heard by my family, reciting: "Christo nostro infantia"; three words of the hymn which I have never forgotten. When evening came, I had the difficult task of smuggling the Gentile boys into my room and then converting those ragamuffins into kings from Eastern lands. Their ill-smelling sheepskin coats were hidden in my bed, and the red garments of the acolytes, re-adorned by gilt paper, were thrown over the scanty clothing which remained. Then with gilt star, sceptre and crowns, we started out into the bitter cold to seek the Child in the Manger. I carried the star, and being cast for the part of the wise man from the land of the Moors, my face was blackened with stove-polish, generously applied by my brother by vaccination.

We made straightway for the home of the *Pany*, at the edge of the town. It seemed a fairy palace to our unspoiled eyes. As in a dream I climbed the broad stairway leading to the upper chambers, although I was very conscious of the unusual garments I wore and in whose folds my ungainly feet were entangled.

Our welcome was not such as royal guests might expect, and very reluctantly we were led

into the drawing-room where, nearly touching the high ceiling, stood the lighted Christmas tree from which hung glittering things that fairly dazzled us.

I had been told that in Catholic homes we would be greeted, according to custom, in the following manner: "You royal sirs, our visitors, what is the cause that brings you thus?"

Instead of that, the rough, jeering voice of the *Pany* said: "Get done with your mummery, you lousy brats!" The two Gentile boys, born to obey such commands, fell upon their knees and recited:

> "Oh! do not be afraid of us,
> Your royal, Eastern visitors.
> To worship, we have come from far,
> Led by a wondrous, shining star;
> For we have heard this glorious thing
> That to the Jews is born a king."

Then came the Latin hymn with its chorus, in which I was supposed to join lustily; but throughout which I was silent.

> "Eya! Eya! Virgo Deum genuit quem divina
> voluit potentia." . . .

It was a corrupt Latin and out of tune, which the boys sang; and when they had finished, they rose, conscious of the fact that there was something wrong with them or their audience, and

there was. I was in the thick of a desperate fight with the *Pany's* son who was trying to throw me. Ordinarily, he would not have had a difficult task; but my wounded, royal pride had given me unknown strength, and majestically I held my ground.

"Get down, you dirty peasant!" the lad cried viciously, while I, loudly protesting that I was not a peasant, fought him back until, coming to close quarters, we rolled on the floor, I holding him down with my hands and knees.

"Enough of this, you impudent fellow!" the angry voice of the *Pany* said, as he lifted me roughly from the badly damaged form of his scion. "Enough of this! Get out of here!"

I was ready enough to go; but fate willed otherwise.

"Why didn't you kneel?" the *Pany* asked, as I picked up my demoralized crown and the star, which in the scuffle had been ruthlessly torn from my mother's yardstick, on top of which it had guided our footsteps.

"Because I am a king and not a peasant, and I won't kneel to any one."

Loud laughter greeted this speech, for it betrayed my race and religion. Mockingly, the *Pany* took me by the back of the neck.

"Ah, so!" he said; "that's your new business, being a king. Now, you dirty little *Schid*, get out of here, quick!" And down the broad stair-

way, which a few minutes before led me up to Paradise, I stumbled onto earth again.

With tears streaming down my blackened face and the acolyte's garments half torn from my body, I tried to find my way out of the lower hall, the other two kings having basely deserted me—when a woman's hand reached out to me in the dark. A very gentle touch it was, and it drew me into a warm and beautiful room. Then I saw that the woman was the *Pany's* sister, an "old maid" known all through the town for her piety and good works. She washed my face with warm water, and arranged my dress so that I would be better shielded from the cold; she filled my pockets with nuts and such sweets as she knew I could eat, and as she led me out, she kissed my forehead and said: "Our Lord was a little Jewish boy, just like you." Then she kissed my lips and said, "In His name."

I ran home through the increasing cold as fast as my feet could carry me, into my room and to bed, but spent a restless night. I dreamed of the *Pany's* son and of his sister, feeling kicks and kisses alternately. Then I travelled, far and farther, following the star, looking for the crib and the Child, but never finding them.

That Christmas morning I shall never forget. The maid found my bed full of vermin which had crawled out of the boys' sheepskin coats, and the towels and toilet articles were a mass of stove-

polish. It was a day of intensest suffering under punishment of various kinds, yet through it all I felt the kisses of the *Pany's* sister on my forehead and on my lips.

I was neither a Wise Man nor a king, yet I was wiser than I had been and I was as proud as a king, for I had not knelt at the *Pany's* command and I had whipped his son.

VI

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN HUNGARY

TEN o'clock in the morning was the one tense hour of the day, for the omnibus was due to arrive and, with it, everything which connected our town with the outside world. Although most of the villagers expected neither letters nor friends, every one who had even a moment of leisure stepped to his front door when the omnibus came, and tried to catch a glimpse of the sleepy passengers who had spent a torturing night in the sombre, springless vehicle. In front of the Black Eagle Inn, congregated town loafers, children and the aged, who alone had leisure to watch the passengers alight.

This was an exciting procedure, for the omnibus was high, and its one window served also as exit, so that the passengers' feet protruded through the small opening first, the bodies being drawn carefully after. It was a mirth-provoking performance, and as laughter was an indulgence not often experienced in our sober environment, all who could afford the leisure and the laughter awaited the daily diversion at the Black Eagle Inn.

On a certain Sabbath morning I had absented myself from the synagogue. It was a June day of rare beauty with a warm, wooing, gentle wind, calling the boy in me back to the creek, the willow-trees, the goslings and the Gentile boys and girls. While nature with its willows and its goslings had no objection to my "cutting" the synagogue service, its Gentile and ungenteel children objected seriously, and I was driven back to the dusty street, with its cobblestone pavement. There was nothing to do except go to the synagogue or join the crowd of loafers around the Black Eagle Inn, and I chose the latter, although at great peril; for to be caught loafing on the Sabbath, during the hours of morning service, was sure to bring dire consequences. The clatter of hoofs and rattle of wheels were already heard, proceeding from a cloud of dust which came nearer and nearer as the omnibus swayed into sight. Its emaciated, weary horses responded to the whip of the driver as they made one last, brave effort at a gallop; then stopped at their accustomed place, steaming from heat and too weary even to whisk the gathering flies from their backs.

"How many passengers have you?" some one called to the driver.

"Three-quarters of a man," he replied, laughing coarsely.

The crowd stood for a moment speechless, as

the leather curtain was thrown back and a wooden leg appeared; then carefully feeling for the foot-rest, came a real leg and foot. In due time the back followed, covered by a dusty blue coat, and the man stood before us—three-quarters of a man indeed; for above the wooden leg hung an empty coat sleeve.

From the depths of the vehicle the driver drew a brass-bound trunk. It was a strange-looking, gorgeous affair, and made almost as great a sensation among the astonished onlookers as the three-quarters of a man in the blue suit and brass buttons had made. A queer-looking, soft hat shaded his bearded face, in which I intuitively detected faint traces of our common, racial ancestry. He swung his cane at the gaping crowd and called out, in military language: "Right about, face! March!" The crowd obeyed mechanically, and he hobbled unmolested into the inn. I followed him, for two reasons: first, the synagogue service was just over and I was sure to be discovered in this forbidden spot. Secondly, this was a new species of humanity to me, as new as the sewing-machine which had come to our house about a week before, and as wonderful as the coal-oil lamp, the marvellous light of which now illuminated our home for the first time. Strange to say, all these had come from America, during the last fortnight.

"Why are you looking at me, youngster?"

the man asked, shaking his empty sleeve at me. "Have you never seen three-quarters of a man before? What's your name?"

While he waited for my reply, he took a pull at his bottle of *palenka*, the common drink of the peasants. When he heard my name, he stared at me less fiercely.

"Come here," he said, patting my curly head. "I am a Jew myself."

"You are not, you cannot be! No Jew ever drinks *palenka*."

"Boy," he replied, pushing aside the empty bottle, "I am three-quarters of a man, but not even one-quarter a Jew. "I have been to war, where I lost my arm and leg, and I have been in America, where I lost my Judaism." Then with an air of abandonment, he ordered a pork roast for his dinner.

I was grievously shocked, and to save even the remnant of a Jew in him, I suggested that he go home with me and eat a good, *kosher* Sabbath dinner. Hospitality is a virtue of the Jewish home, and there was scarcely a Sabbath meal without some unfortunate at our table. I felt sure that mother would not object to this guest, especially if I made it clear to her that I had saved the man from eating pork roast.

I remember most vividly my going home with this Jewish soldier and the pride I felt in walking beside a man who had come from America.

Doors and windows were opened, while black-eyed maidens and gray-haired matrons craned their necks to get a glimpse of the stranger. All that blessed Sabbath our house was the centre of attraction, and hundreds of inquiries had to be answered.

"Who was he?" An old townsman who, years ago, ran away from home, and after many adventures landed in America. He enlisted in the Federal army, was discharged, pensioned and had come home to die.

"Aye! Aye!" the townspeople said. "Who would have thought that one of us should come from America!"

That same day the brass-bound trunk was brought to our house, for mother took pity on the homeless man and told him to stay with us. She hoped to keep him from drinking *palenka* and eating pork. The latter was not difficult, but the *palenka*—that was impossible.

"The brass-bound trunk no doubt holds his treasures," the neighbours said. Treasures indeed! His discharge from the army, which was framed and hung over his bed, a second suit of blue, a huge flag—the Stars and Stripes—a history of the Civil War in German, a book called "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and the picture of a sad-faced man.

Every day I heard about the land of freedom

from one who had been there, the German book I soon knew by heart, the flag I learned to love, and Abraham Lincoln, the sad-faced man, took the place of our patriarch Abraham in my heart and imagination.

"How is it," I asked the old soldier, "that this man, who was a Christian, was called Abraham?"

"My boy," he said, "he was a Christian; but he was as good a Jew as the patriarch Abraham. The great lawgiver, Moses, led his own people out of bondage; this man led a strange, African race out of slavery." Then he read and translated to me "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and I have never forgotten a single incident in that vivid story. So thoroughly was I imbued by its spirit, that I gathered a group of boys to whom I preached my first revolutionary sermon. I pictured to them the sufferings of our poor and the harshness of our government as typified by the vicious judge and the cruel and venal police. I tried to exact an oath from the boys to help me free these peasant slaves and, if necessary, fight the judge and the police.

Fortunately for the government, my classmates would not enthuse; instead, they told the teacher, who tried to whip my revolutionary ideas out of me, and when I reached home almost too sore to walk, I found great comfort in looking into the sad face of Abraham Lincoln, my patron

saint and the inspirer of my passion for the common people.

"Uncle Joe," as the old soldier wished to be called, drank *palenka* heavily and almost constantly; the three-quarters of a man wasted away until he was scarcely half a man, and we knew and he knew that the end was not far away. I was in his room one Saturday afternoon; my mother sat beside him holding his thin, bony hand and he was quite sober, as I believe he had not often been since coming to us.

"You think I am a bad man," he said to my mother. "I drink, I smoke on the Sabbath, I do not lay the phylacteries. I am a bad man; but I have fought, I have suffered cold and hunger and I have fallen into bad habits.

"I think God will forgive me. I know He will if He is anything like Abraham Lincoln. He forgave me once. I was about to be shot," he whispered hoarsely. "He forgave me, and when I come before Jehovah I shall call for Abraham Lincoln. He spoke a good word for me once—he will do it again."

The old soldier looked around the room and his glance rested appealingly on the face of the sad-eyed man who had borne the sufferings and agonies of many men.

"Give that picture to the boy who brought me to you—let him have the book also. The flag you must wrap me in; let it be my shroud. My

discharge I want buried with me and let them fire a salute over my grave; for it will be a soldier's grave."

Coming home the next day at noon, I heard the pious men of our community repeating verses spoken at the bedside of the dying. It was a weird lamentation that went up from those hoarse-throated men, and in the tumult of voices affirming faith in the God of Israel, "Uncle Joe's" soul took its flight.

To induce the pious men, whose consent was necessary, to wrap his body in the Stars and Stripes, was difficult, but was finally accomplished through my mother's importunity. The firing of the salute was out of the question, for no Jew owned a gun, and it would be sacrilege to hire a Gentile to use one.

The solemn procession came to the cemetery with its burden and they buried him after the manner of the Jews. But hardly had the last man left the grave when three shots were fired, startling young and old alike.

Istvan, the Hungarian shepherd, once a soldier himself, had yielded to my entreaties and paid this last tribute to a warrior.

Istvan was fined and imprisoned for shooting within the limits of the cemetery; I too was punished, and the common suffering created fellowship between us. Over and over again, while he was watching his sheep, I told him

the story of the life and death of Abraham Lincoln.

"Too bad," he would say, "that he had a Jewish name. Too bad that his name was Abraham."

VII

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

NO man of another race than my own spoke kindly to me after I had developed some sense of race consciousness. "Little Jew" was the mildest term in which I was addressed, and it ranged to the cruel "Christ-Killer"—a rather questionable term to apply to a seven-year-old lad, who could not have looked very ferocious, with his blue eyes and his shock of curly blond hair. I knew I was guiltless of the last appellation, even if I understood its meaning, which I doubt; but I was quite sure I was a little Jew and every time I was called that, it hurt, as if I were smitten by a lash. I cannot help wincing yet when the word Jew is applied to me; I suppose it hurt because it was meant to. It is the mental attitude of the other man which makes me sensitive, rather than the name itself, which was one to conjure with through many a Golden Age.

One man—the only man who took me for just the boy I was and treated me as such—was the miller; and because he treated me kindly, and heroically controlled the rush of the mill-race and the turning of the mighty water-wheels, I

placed him in my mind next to Jehovah in power. Whenever I try to visualize heaven, I invariably see the miller's bleached face (which looked like one of the rolls baked from his flour) smiling at me from amongst the crowd of saints and I seem to hear him saying, as he used to say: "Hello, little fellow, come in and see my little girl and talk German to her." That is just how he greeted me one day when decorously lifting my cap and saying in good German, "Guten Morgen, Herr Müller," I passed tremblingly over the bridge, underneath which the water rushed tumultuously, ready to do the miller's bidding in turning the huge wheels. What connection the wheels had with the endless clatter within I did not yet know; other mysteries were to disclose themselves first. There were the pigeons in their nests, and he lifted me high towards them and laughed when my outstretched hand was quickly withdrawn; for a mother bird did not like my intrusion. There was his hunting dog, which jumped at me and nearly frightened me out of my wits, but who merely wanted to tell me in his dog fashion that, as far as he was concerned, he had no race prejudices. And we were close friends—this dog and I—even related, later, for one of its young became my own—the only pet of my childhood.

I have some definite impressions of a peculiar, large living-room, which seemed rocked by the

rattling mill. I can recall certain pictures on the wall, for the Jewish home was devoid of such ornaments and these were the first secular pictures I had seen. There were German battles and portraits of Bismarck and the Prussian king. Four or five lads, sons of the miller, stood about and seemed to delight in my presence. All of them looked bleached, like the miller, and Martha, the only daughter, was of the same type; but lovely to me as a fairy, with her long, flaxen hair which hung heavily below her waist. Her rather pale and delicate face and her large, blue eyes fascinated me.

That living-room became the birthplace of my Germanic ideals—there I first heard the name of Bismarck, for the miller was a German to the core, and from him I heard wonderful anecdotes about Frederick the Great. There also I read with Martha the love-songs of Heine, Schiller and Goethe, declaiming them to her, no doubt, in the most sentimental manner. Out of it all grew a love life, so mystic and beautiful that I think of it every time the spring comes and I smell the faint tree odours in the early April days. Martha was about five years older than I, but she was more than twice as old in her physical and mental maturity, and I watched her growth with ill-concealed jealousy. The rounding of her form into womanhood caused me excruciating suffering. In frightful rage I once tore from her

one of Schiller's most sentimental ballads, which some young sprig had copied for her, and I forbade her to read it. I do not remember what she said or did but she was so gentle and sweet about it that I was heartily ashamed of myself.

I felt her slipping away from me and almost gone, when one night she went to a ball at the "Aristocratic Club." Through one of the windows to which I had climbed I watched her dancing, and was twice thrown down by some Gentile lads, who expressed themselves quite freely as to the business a little Jew had looking in at Gentile folks' balls. I had a deep impression that dancing as I saw it was not right. I cannot explain what I felt. I certainly was too young to see any immorality in it; but my intuitions were so strong that afterwards I felt as if Martha had either done a great wrong or that she had been grievously wronged. I think I must have inherited deep puritanic tendencies; for the orthodox Jew is puritanical, and although my mother allowed my sisters to dance, I know that she did not give her permission until after a great struggle. Once, I scarcely know how old I was, certainly not more than five, my sister was going to a ball in a rather décolleté gown, and her bare neck and arms so offended me that I forbade her going. When she dragged me away from the door to which I barred her way, I scratched her arm so badly that she had to re-

main at home. I have good reason to remember that event, for my older brother beat me so badly for the cowardly act that I did not sleep all night and had opportunity to repent. I did not embrace the opportunity for I felt that I had suffered in a good cause.

The miller's daughter was lost to me in more than one way. Young snobs hung about when I came to call and "snubbed" me until I had no more courage to return. I suppose a year or more had passed since I had called on her, when I heard a rumour that she was ill. She had caught cold at a dance, I overheard the women say, and they were feeding her on raw eggs and a certain drink called chocolate, and that was a sign of wasting disease. One day her younger brother, a boy of about my own age, called for me. He said that his sister was dying and wished to see me. My beloved mother, who had smiled many a time over my devotion to the miller's daughter, and had never opposed my visiting her but rather encouraged it on account of the German I spoke there, knew the solemnity of the occasion and saw to it that I was properly attired on this my last visit. The mill wheels were silent, the only time that I ever knew them so. The pigeons and rabbits were there, more numerous than ever, and the miller's hunting dog, dear old friend that he was, greeted me fondly. The miller for once was not dusty from

flour and his face did not resemble a penny roll. He looked like a crushed man and when he saw me, his huge breast laboured as if the pent-up pain were ready to burst it. He made some inarticulate sounds as if he were trying to weep and could not. It was the first time I had seen a man suffer great heart agonies, and it tortured me. They led me into Martha's bedroom. How wasted she was! Her blue eyes seemed strangely aglow, her nose so much larger than I had ever thought it, and her poor emaciated fingers picked at the bedclothing which covered her. I do not remember what she said, whether she spoke of living or dying. I just felt the pressure of the pain, and before they led me away I threw myself by her bed crying, and then a strange thing happened; her burning lips were upon my hot forehead, and her poor, thin fingers moved through my hair. I felt as if it were spring time again, as if we were looking for the fragrant violets which grew by the mill-race; and the sweet odour of trees seemed to fill the air.

I left the room bathed in hot tears, those very hot, scalding tears, which come from the very depths of one's being, and as I went crying through the streets, a hoyden, a woman of ill repute—the lowest of the low—caught me and asked: "Little boy, why are you crying?" Then she too kissed me on the forehead. Truly, the very good and the very bad have no race prejudice.

VIII

THE FALL OF THE GOOSE GIRL

BACK of our house was a long row of tenements, inhabited by the poorer class of Gentiles. These peasants were at the verge of starvation, although usually in the summer and autumn they lived rather comfortably, indulging in such luxuries as *palenka*, salt pickles and smoked bacon, heavily covered by paprika. If in the winter they had cabbage soup and a scanty potful of beans they were fortunate; while only an occasional midnight incursion into some more fortunate neighbour's kitchen brought a hasty mouthful of meat. My mother owned the tenements and as a result there was a certain deference paid me by these peasants, especially in the winter time, when I did not treat my mother's well-stocked larder too honestly, answering their appeal for food.

Three races were represented by these tenants of ours; Slovaks, Magyars and Gypsies. The last named were the musicians of the town and had given up their nomadic habits, while the first two were almost literally "the hewers of wood and drawers of water." I was on the

best terms with the Gypsies, especially with one who played the cornet and played it with all the fervour of his Gypsy nature. Whatever musical education I have, I purchased its beginning from him, paying in buttered rolls and Sabbath cakes for Schubert's Serenade and the Swan Song from Lohengrin—two of my favourite songs even yet. The goose girl's parents were our tenants during this period. Her father was a pseudo Magyar: that is, a Slav who had changed his name and swore in the Magyar language while he continued to drink *palenka* like the Slovak he was, and beat or otherwise abused his family like the brute who is pretty much alike among all the fallen children of men. The goose girl had long ago stopped herding geese. She had been a nurse-maid and later a very indifferent house servant, accused by her many mistresses of theft, lying and excessive vanity. To the last named quality of her nature I could have borne abundant evidence, for she persuaded me on a moonlight night to bring her one of my younger sister's ball dresses, which she put on in the shadow of a pear tree standing far back in our garden. As she emerged into the moonlight, looking to me like a fairy princess, she demanded my obeisance, and made me call her "Kis Aszonka," which is the Hungarian term for a young lady of the upper class and is never applied to a peasant girl. As a peacock spreads his feathers, so the

goose girl spread the train of my sister's gown, dragging it over the dewy grass, much to my dismay then and more to my sorrow the next day, when my sister discovered the green spots upon her best gown.

Not long after this, I heard that my childhood's friend had run away from home. Her father cursed more than usual, her mother cried and the neighbours said: "I told you so." When later I asked her father what had become of his daughter he replied: "I suppose she has gone to the devil."

I do not know how long a time had passed since her disappearance, when a certain spring came with unusual rapture, swept across the meadows, drove the ice out of the river in a night and climbed the foothills of the Carpathians, leaving the big mountains still covered by snow. It was a Sunday and May-day, the Gypsies had gone to the houses of the nobility and also to the lesser folk, in whose pockets they suspected small change which they would lure out by their stirring music. The peasant lads had gathered at the inn and were boasting of their prowess in climbing May-poles and of their eagerness to climb an unusually tall and smooth one, at whose top tempting prizes of coloured neckerchiefs and bottles of *palenka* awaited the man who could make his boast true. The room in which the peasants gathered was a bare one,

although a few coloured prints of anæmic-looking saints hung upon the once whitewashed wall. In one corner on the beaten earth floor was a bundle of straw which served as beds for poorer wayfarers, while the better furnished adjoining room was reserved for the higher class of guests, none of whom had yet arrived, as it was still early. Even when a boy I had a curious interest in people and always disregarded class distinctions. I wanted to see that May-day celebration as the peasants saw it. I wasn't merely curious; I know that I celebrated with them. I felt sorry if the rain spoiled their holidays and that day was unusually happy because the weather was fine. A square-jawed, heavy-faced lad, whom my mother had hired to work in the field, was my sponsor and guide. He wore his very best and most gorgeous garments and from his rakish hat hung rather defiantly the feather of a cock with whose erstwhile owner, this youth, whose name was Shimek, shared his predilection for a fight. "First music, then a fight and after the fight, a girl to love." This was Shimek's Sunday program, although to do him justice, he went to church in the morning. One must not believe, though, that he was seriously concerned about his soul; for the plan of salvation, if he ever thought of it, was expressed by him in the song, sung by just such youths through many generations:

"He who can dance well
And payeth the fiddler
Angels will lift him
Up into heaven."

While they had no fiddler to make merry for them, they had the goose girl's father—who could evoke music out of a threshing flail. This he did by rubbing the flail over one of his fingers which he held on the table. The result was a rumbling sound, not unlike the monotonous notes of a bass viol. In a quavering voice he began singing to his accompaniment a familiar song, the swinging melody of which was snatched from his lips by the ever ready Shimek, who knew every song born in the merry heart of the Slovak and who taught me many of them, none of which I have forgotten. This is the song he sang:

"On the white mountain
The peasant ploweth,
Has a fine daughter,
Grant her me, Heaven!"

All the half-drunk guests sang the chorus:

"Hey, zuppy, zuppy, zupp,
Grant her me, Heaven!
Hey, zuppy, zuppy, zupp."

Above the noisy chorus came the rumbling of Matushek's improvised instrument which he rubbed over his fingers until the blood came spurting out. Even then he would not stop, until every verse was sung:

"O! if I had her,
I would rejoice so.
Three hundred dollars
Quickly I'd earn.
Huy, zuppy, zuppy, zupp.

"Dear little woman!
Three hundred dollars!
I'd make her travel
In a closed carriage.
Huy, zuppy, zuppy, zupp.

"Servants in front of her,
Servants behind her,
And they must call her
My high-born lady.
Huy, zuppy, zuppy, zupp."

Many times the crowd sang the ringing chorus, accompanying it with their feet upon the floor and their fists upon the table. As they sang, the sound of bells came nearer and nearer, not clear enough at first to disturb the revellers. Then it grew louder and louder, until just before it stopped, some one heard it. The tumult ceased and every one ran to the door to see the omnibus whose coming was still the event of the day. It had undergone some changes since I first knew it in my early boyhood, although the changes were only external. Upon its new covering of leather was printed in three languages, "Omnibus to Hodowin, tour et retour, one florin." The "tour et retour" was the same in all the languages and at first puzzled every one

except a few of the elect who, thanks to some French phrases which had filtered into our community, understood its meaning. To proceed rearward out of the stage was doubly difficult that day, as each of the passengers, who were all women, had a baby wrapped closely in a linen sheet, hanging from her shoulders. Some fifteen women finally drew themselves and their precious burdens out of the tunnel of the stage, and from the depths of sundry wrappings one could hear the voices of their charges. The fact that they could be heard at all out of the mass of feather pillows and linen sheets unto which they had sunk, proved their great lung capacity.

When the last passenger had left the stage, the peasants returned to the room which they had so lately deserted—followed by the women, who silenced the cries of the infants with milk, out of bottles in various stages of uncleanliness. The women themselves ate heartily of the rye bread which was sold them at the inn and drank freely of the *palenka* generously offered by the numerous Sunday guests.

Just one woman held her baby close to her breast and shamefacedly nourished it in the darkest corner she could find. She was the mother of her child. The other women, most of them much older than she, had been in Vienna and gathered these little ones as they would have garnered any remunerative crop.

In a high gray house facing the general hospital, these little ones were born, thousands of them every month, tens of thousands every year; some of them born on fine linen, out of love, most of them born on coarse cotton, out of love's counterfeit; but all of them born out of wedlock.

Because the young mother wore the garb of the city, I felt free to talk to her. I addressed her in German and when she lifted her face and looked into mine, I recognized the long lost goose girl. Shimek, my guardian during these festal hours, recognized her as quickly as I had. "Boze muy, boze muy," he cried, "it is Katuska!"

Her father, stick in hand, jumped to his feet at the mention of his daughter's name and before we knew it the stick had fallen upon her head, and she was crying piteously while the baby, too, lifted up its voice. Mockingly the old man walked up and down before his daughter and called her "Kis Aszonka." "With whose baby have I the honour of making acquaintance?" he asked. I do not recollect all that happened but the stick suddenly came down more heavily than before upon the girl's back. "A bastard brat!" her father cried; "a bastard brat!" he repeated, almost insane from anger. "No, not into my house—not into my house!" Slamming the door of the inn behind him he left his daughter among the gaping crowd of men. Shimek drew

me aside and whispered: "Would I stand by him if he took the goose girl and her baby into the loft above the stable? Would I intercede with my mother in his behalf if she should object?"

I remember distinctly the feeling which came over me when I held that poor little waif in my arms and carried it as far as the loft in which Shimek was domiciled, while he led the goose girl who was too weak to walk alone. I then felt for the first time what I have since felt a thousand times when holding children in my arms: a joyous sense of relationship which no one can dispute and the children cannot repudiate. I hovered around that stable many a day and heard with aching heart the crying of the baby.

My mother visited the goose girl in the stable loft and her baby in the manger. She made some kind of satisfactory arrangements with Shimek; for that evening we saw him, Katuska and the baby, sitting under the pear tree in the garden. He was singing lustily the love-song he had carelessly thrown at many a maiden before:

"Will you take my heart?
Will you give your heart?
I am yours, my love,
You're my turtle dove
Hiy, hiy,
Will you be my love?"

There was only one answer which the goose girl could give him and as soon as the bans were read in church, the marriage was solemnized. Mother and I were guests of honour and that which I enjoyed most about the wedding was, that I held the baby while the priest spoke the words which united in holy wedlock—Shimek and the goose girl.

IX

AN UNWILLING JEW

IN some villages scattered along the highways which led from our town, feeling against the Jews was especially marked. I do not know how to account for this, although wherever race antagonisms have developed, one finds that in certain communities prejudice is very strong, while others are practically immune from it. The village of Rovensko was feared by all Jews, who never passed through it after sundown; for they would have been assaulted. Even in broad daylight they were never safe from insult. Frequently raids against the Jews in our own town were organized in Rovensko and whenever we met a peasant from there on our streets we immediately knew him to be an enemy. Boys in the adolescent period seemed to be most vicious and many a time I had to suffer from their fists and still more from their jibes and taunting songs.

The leader of this gang of boys was a foundling who had been brought to the village by a childless widow. Her tender heart-strings were so wrapped about the lad that when the time

came to send him back to the "Big Gray Mother," as the foundlings' home was called, she decided to adopt him and did so without the consent of the authorities. The boy was unusually handsome, his face betraying a rather fine type of ancestry and only as he grew older did his features become coarse. When he was drunk, and that was often, one could not distinguish him from the rest of the Rovensko lads. Hatred of the Jews seemed to be an absorbing and consuming passion with him. He had broken into the synagogue and polluted the sacred scrolls; he had invaded the Jewish cemetery and levelled many a headstone. It was he who was most active in the periodical Easter raids against our community; yet in spite of my fear of him or perhaps because of it, I developed a fondness for him. He was big, strong, fearless; and, strange to say, reciprocated my feeling. A number of times he saved me from rough treatment by his comrades. Once when they had hurt me and I was crying, he offered dangerous consolation in the form of a green apple, which he drew from the folds of his shirt.

One day there was a rumour that his parents were searching for him, that the judge had received money to repay the widow for her care of the boy and that fine clothing had been sent him. The rumours were confirmed when he appeared on the streets in a fashionable Viennese

suit, smoking a long, Hungarian cigar and treating everybody to *palenka*, himself taking wine until he was drunk, after which he drank *palenka* with the peasants. That night, he and his comrades marched through the streets, breaking as many window-panes in Jewish homes as they could find, and spreading terror in all hearts. What remained of the night he passed in jail and was kept there, first, because he deserved it and secondly because the policeman wanted to help him spend his money. The court-house and the jail were opposite our house and one evening I saw him coming out, pale and bleareyed, his fashionable clothing creased and crumpled and his linen soiled. Something impelled me to speak to him and invite him to come and drink a cup of coffee in our kitchen. Perhaps it was gratitude for his kindness to me or possibly it was to heap coals of fire upon his head; more likely it was merely the boy's chance to worship a hero; at any rate, he drank two cups of coffee and as he crunched the sugar between his teeth, I ventured to ask him why he hated the Jews. "It's in the blood," he said. "When I see a Jew I get angry and feel like hitting him over the head." Then he put his rough fingers into my hair and pulled it until my cries brought my mother. When he saw her, he left the kitchen with an oath, banging the door behind him. My mother took me to task for wasting our good

coffee on an enemy and we seriously discussed this terrible question of being a Jew, of being hated by the Gentiles and hating in turn. I do not recall just what she said, but I know she tried to prove to me that the differences between the races were so great that we could not help hating one another. When I insisted that I did not and could not hate even this our arch-enemy, she took me into her arms and our argument ended in kisses as was often the case.

An unusual thing happened a little later which put nearly the whole town in a ferment. A carriage came from the far-away railroad station and its occupants, a prosperous and intelligent-looking couple, alighted at the court-house. I remember the woman's beautiful costume, her fine figure and especially her sad face. There was much discussion in our house as to whether or not she was a Jewess. Quickly the news spread through the town that the foundling's parents had arrived and that they would take him back to Vienna. An officious policeman began the search for Anton, which was the foundling's name, and when the lucky boy appeared he was the envy of all the town. When the doors of the court-house closed upon him, half the population gathered to witness his triumphant reappearance with his parents, whose wealth was regarded as fabulous and their social rank high.

After what seemed to me a very long time the doors were opened violently and Anton, rushing out like a madman, ran down the street as fast as his legs could carry him. The gentleman led the lady to the carriage. Her face was hidden against his breast and she was crying bitterly. Then they drove away while the inquisitive by-standers wondered what had happened.

From that time on, Anton never took part in any raid against the Jews; not because he had become a peaceful citizen—he had more fights on his hands than before; for whenever his former comrades wished to taunt him, they called him "Jew," which so enraged him that he would fight to the blood; for he *was* a Jew.

X

THE PRINCE COMES

THE town was being turned upside down; at least it seemed so to those of us who had lived in its undisturbed atmosphere, from year's end to year's end. A prince—the crown prince was to pass through it on his way to the maneuvres;—so churches and synagogue vied with each other in preparing a worthy welcome. The Catholics, representing the ruling minority, were to head the procession, the Lutherans would follow and the Jews, of course, were to come last. The children had been given an important part in the program, and my mother was busy many days drilling me for my part, as I was to be the spokesman for the Jewish children.

I won this place of honour in a competitive declamation of a speech of welcome prepared by our teacher, and day or night there was nothing on my lips but its fine sounding and well-rounded phrases. I have not forgotten that eventful day for many reasons. I wore a new suit, and a stiff collar which belonged to my sister and had to be fastened to me by various artificial devices. I recall the great relief which followed, when my

task was done after the countless times I had practiced my bow and my speech; but above all, I saw a prince, a lad only a few years older than myself—wearing the uniform of a cavalry officer, his coat covered by glittering stars and crosses, his weary face looking out of a frame of heavy, black hair.

There were princes in my fairy tales and often in my dreams; but now a real prince had materialized, and so great was the pomp which surrounded him and so overwrought were my nerves, that I was not the least disillusioned by the reality. A brass band headed the procession, which moved from the market square to the *Pany's* castle, where the prince was domiciled. Following the band came representatives of the Catholic Church, with all the splendour that she can display even in so small and wretched a parish. The priests, in their most elaborate vestments, looked to me like demigods, and the poor, pinched peasant lads, now clothed in the gorgeous garb of acolytes, were fit attendants for these deities; the county and town dignitaries came next, then distinguished citizens carrying banners, and last came the school children, singing patriotic Magyar songs. In the next division were the Lutherans, and what they lacked in splendid church vestments, they made up in the gorgeous attire of the Slavic peasant men and women, in whose garments

colour ran such riot that even the most discordant tints were forced to blend harmoniously. On the outskirts of the market-place, the Jews gathered; a motley group of sober-looking, bearded men. It was difficult to organize them into an orderly procession. Not only were military habits distasteful to them, but they were such strong individualists that to march together and keep step with one another was as difficult as to keep in time or tune, while they said their prayers or chanted in the synagogue.

Finally some order was brought into the chaos, and this, the last division of the procession, moved, the rabbi leading with the president of the congregation. When I saw the straggling lines of Jews following, bent as if the burden of ages was upon their backs, I felt thoroughly ashamed of them. The crowd of bystanders did not help my mood any, for they jeered us from the time we started until we reached the courtyard, where the ceremonial of welcome was to take place. The *Pany's* castle was a two-storied, unostentatious building, hidden behind a grove of acacia trees. Chiselled out of the same gray stone as the building was a tribune flanked by a double stairway, at the top of which the prince stood, surrounded by his retinue.

We cheered him loudly at a given signal, and sang the national anthem as harmoniously as we

could, considering that we sang it in three languages. Then came addresses of welcome by the Magyar officials, who almost prostrated themselves. The Catholic priest, his trailing robe carried by two acolytes, advanced; he would have made obeisance, but the prince bowed low before this representative of the church and kissed his hand. The scene made an indelible impression upon my mind, although of course I did not then understand its significance. The Lutheran pastor followed and made a ringing address, pleading for his poor and oppressed people—a speech which cost him his official head. Then our rabbi walked hesitatingly up the time-worn steps, making his address in corrupt German and in so low a voice that no one heard it, not even the prince, who talked to his attendants during its delivery. The crowd was tired out when I made my way towards the prince, led by my teacher. I have since counted the steps which led to the tribune and found that there were just nine of them; that day they looked like at least ninety; in fact they seemed to stretch endlessly upwards, and at their head, far out of my reach, stood the prince. A desperate courage took hold of me. I made my oft practiced courtesy and immediately caught the attention of the prince and the crowd.

I was a lad of seven or eight and as I look at my picture of that time, I find that I had a head

too large for my body, a mass of curly, blond hair which emphasized its size and, my eyes being blue, complexion fair and features regular, I did not look Jewish.

I delivered my address, retaining in some measure my self-possession: I did not look at the prince but at my dear mother, to whom this moment was the proudest in my life, for when my speech was finished, the prince beckoned to me. Then the two remaining steps between him and me appeared to stretch out interminably, and it seemed an age before I reached the place where he stood. He put his hand on my head, and said some kind words, after which he turned to his attendants and said in the Magyar language: "Too bad, too bad that he is a Jew. He doesn't look or act like one." Of course, I was the envied of all beholders, Jews and Gentiles alike, but I was a very unhappy boy. I cried all that evening and when mother put me to bed, she could not stop my tears, in spite of her telling me of King David and King Solomon, who were Jews yet were great kings, and as far as we knew we might be their descendants. After she left me, I spent nearly the whole night between sleeping and waking;—the thought uppermost in my mind being how terrible a thing it was to be a Jew, and that perhaps it might happen to me as it did in the fairy tales, that I was not really my mother's

son, but stolen by a witch or a fairy out of some castle, and that in due time I should be released from this captivity and return in triumph to my lordly estate. Towards morning I must have slept soundly, for I felt keen disappointment when I opened my eyes and saw the same narrow room with its bare walls and the high cupboard with its modest treasures. By the well-known fragrance of the breakfast coffee which filled my nostrils, I knew that my mother was not a queen or I a prince, but that I was just a little Jewish boy, whom many people despised and some pitied. The fact that I was more than a nine days' wonder after this did not atone for the terrible words of the prince, which kept ringing in my ears, "Too bad he is a Jew!"

XI

THE CHILD ON THE BATTLE-FIELD

WHEN the Master asked His disciples to take no thought for the morrow, He asked what to the Jew was the most difficult attitude of mind,—at least to the Jewish mind as I knew it. In my childhood, the Jewish characteristic was to be burdened by care to the degree that full, unqualified pleasure seemed impossible. Even to-day, when I meet men who come from Jewish homes in the Old World, they invariably tell me that news from home is never unreservedly good, and letters are dreaded, because they always tell of persecutions that were, are, or will be; of business which is bad, health which is worse and death which comes, leaving so little hope behind. The all-absorbing cares of these Jewish homes are the dowry and marriage of the daughters and the fear of military service for the sons. Mothers begin to lay aside linen and feather pillows for the marriage portion before a girl is out of her swaddling clothes, and money is early put into the bank for the same purpose; so that, unless the family is in more than comfort-

able circumstances, this compels strictest economy and in many cases causes acute suffering.

Among very poor people, it is no rare thing to see mothers begging from door to door for aid in securing a dowry; and to marry off a daughter well, is great good fortune, while to marry her under any circumstances seems to be a compelling duty.

Worry about the sons has in it an admixture of terror. The Jew has no passion for war and every reason to dread it. Persecution has made him timid and he finds that non-resistance is a necessary virtue. Physical courage is not one of his great assets. I have always felt the lack of it and have already called attention to my dread of firearms.

Perhaps one of the strongest factors in making Jewish parents fear the proscription of their sons was the fact that in many cases military service meant a complete breaking away from Jewish customs. The lads themselves had no pleasure in store for them in their association with Gentile comrades and officers who were never too considerate of their feelings. No small wonder then, that everything which could be done legitimately or illegitimately was done to free a son from military service. The rich and unscrupulous bribed the examining military physician and the poor sometimes tried a pro-

longed debauch to make the desired impression of physical unfitness.

There were two great virtues which my mother constantly preached and practiced; charity and contentment. The first kept her from speaking ill of her neighbours and the second saved her from unnecessary worry. Yet I knew that after my brother's name was posted on the court-house doors among the list of those to present themselves for physical examination, she lay awake many a night and I often saw traces of tears on her face. "As God wills," was her characteristic expression, and it seemed to be the will of God that her son should be found fit to serve the Hungarian king in the seventy-third infantry regiment. It was a dreary day in our house, as if some one had died. We walked about on tiptoe and never raised our voices. Only the brother most concerned seemed cheerful or at least pretended to be. He was sworn in at the dirty jail, where the peasant lads were locked up, for fear they might get drunk before they came to that solemn ceremony. Then he returned home, awaiting the command to join his regiment.

When the summons finally came, it was a call to arms—to war. Austria had been apportioned the unruly Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, in her self-confident fashion, hoped to pacify its half-savage inhabitants by

invading their territory with a brass band, regiments of soldiers and a superabundance of useless officers. The untamed Slavs, who spurned Moslem rule and had fought for freedom in their mountains, were not eager to exchange masters, so from behind the rocks they fired their crude blunderbusses and from safe ambush fell upon the trim Hapsburg soldiers. Regiment after regiment was sent, thousands and tens of thousands of soldiers were slain, the national debt leaped into hundreds of millions and the poor women all over that beautiful and unhappy country began making bandages and picking lint for the wounded. The regiment to which my brother belonged was ordered to the front, but before it left he obtained a two days' furlough to visit his mother. It was the Jewish New Year's day; one of the most solemn of all holy days. When early in the evening he came, I remember with what awe I handled his uniform, the dread I felt of his bayonet, fearing to touch it, and the general atmosphere of gloom which pervaded the house. Mother cried all day, we children wept with her and my brother walked up and down in his bright uniform, manfully trying to keep back his own tears. In the evening he had to leave us and it was as sad a leave-taking as I ever have witnessed.

A few days later, the postmaster himself came to our house with a message, which contained

the sad news that my brother had been fatally wounded in the first engagement in which his regiment took part. That night my mother started for the far-away city. I begged to go with her. When she refused to let me, I threw myself in front of the horses, and when I was lifted from the ground I determined not to allow mother to face the misfortune alone. Unseen by any one, I ran through an orchard, across the creek to the highway, and when the carriage came, I jumped onto the protruding rear springs and made myself as comfortable as possible. Early in the morning, when the driver was changing horses, I was discovered, chilled to the bone and hungry; but happy because I was too far away from home to be sent back and could be with my mother in the great sorrow which awaited her.

She dragged herself from hospital to hospital, until our clothes were saturated by the odour of ether, our ears ringing from the groans of dying men, and our hearts heavy to the breaking point. Upon a bit of level soil, scarce in that stony country, soldiers were digging trenches, into which carts full of human bodies were literally dumped, and at each trench mother's eyes searched for her first-born son. As they threw the last cartful of these torn and soiled temples of the spirit into a trench, her heroic strength gave way, for she saw my brother's black hair

matted from blood, and his handsome young face distorted by the pain he had suffered. It was hard to recognize him but she knew it was her son, because he wore the ring she herself had taken from the finger of her dead husband, and put there.

The experience of that day aged my mother and aged me, but it put a new sort of courage into me. I felt enraged by what I saw. I knew that a great wrong was being practiced against the children of men, a wrong which must be righted;—above all, I had seen Slav, Magyar, Jew and Gentile, one in death, so much alike that a Jewish mother scarcely knew her own child; my wise mother talked it all over with me. "Yes, my boy, we are made of the same clay and I believe we have the same spirit in us, no matter what our race or faith." "Then, mother," I said, "if we are all alike, why do we hate each other and kill each other?" But she was not wise enough to answer that question.

XII

THE PENALTY OF SCEPTICISM

OF the comforts and luxuries by which the American child seems to be surfeited, I knew few or none. Sweets I tasted only in the form of Sabbath cake, an occasional piece of loaf sugar, purloined from the pantry, or a sheet of sugar paper, a delicacy whose delights still linger in my memory. This confection was a by-product of the candy shop, and was the sticky substance left in a cornucopia, out of which the Bohemian candy-maker squeezed artistic decorations onto the cakes he made. These "*Skarnitzel*," as they were called, were highly prized by the children; they were of many flavours, but all, whether vanilla, lemon or rose, smelled strongly of snuff tobacco, evidence of the artist's bad habits.

Books and especially newspapers were also scarce, but the candy-maker was a great reader and a sceptic towards religion. After he had read his papers he used them in the manufacture of the afore-mentioned confection, so that "*Skarnitzel*" became a by-product, not only of fancy cakes, but also savoured of Bohemian literature. I was one of the best customers the candy-maker

had, and, while frankly confessing that I licked the sweets from the paper with great gusto and skill, I soon learned to appreciate the literature which remained. Both from the sanitary and the mental standpoint this confection was unwholesome. One winter, after disposing of the covering sweets, I read fragments from the works of Thomas Paine, and another season I reached the bitterest parts of one of Ingersoll's savage attacks upon the Bible. I suppose I did not understand what I read, but it fitted into my rebellious mood and I soon began to make propaganda for my unbelief. When the candy-maker discovered that he had a disciple, he took pains to fill the gaps which remained in my mind, after reading the philosophy of scepticism in so fragmentary a way.

For hours I would sit in his bake shop and while he was decorating cakes or making gorgeously coloured stick candy, he led me into the outskirts of the scientific view of creation, in a crude but, to me, satisfactory manner. The world was self-created, there was no God, no Adam, no Eve, no flood, no patriarchs and no revelation on Sinai. Moses was a shrewd leader who used Egyptian magic to impress the barbaric Israelites. The candy-maker was particularly severe with the heroes of the New Testament, and no less so with Jesus Himself. I recall just one sentence of his argument against the divinity

of the Master. "If He was a God, why did He let them crucify Him? Why did He not come down from the cross and kill His enemies?" Of course, I did not know how old this argument was until I read the New Testament for myself. At school during the recess I gathered my classmates, who were all my seniors (for I made two and three grades each year), and repeated to them what I had heard, amplifying it not a little.

One day, when I was holding forth, I indulged in a bit of prophecy—"The time will come," I said, "when no one will keep the Sabbath and the Passover, when we will not eat unleavened bread or believe in God." Just then the teacher who gave us religious instruction came in. He had evidently listened to what I said, and, taking me by my curly hair, proceeded to drag me out of my seat and make a prophecy which is much more likely to come true than my own. "When you are dead and gone," he said, "and the worms shall have eaten your body, millions of people will keep the Sabbath and the holy days; and the time will *never* come when men will not believe in God." Then he demanded that I recant my unbelief, but being of fairly stern stuff, I refused. He then told me to lie down on a chair, and drew forth a grape-vine switch, the customary instrument of punishment. Again he commanded that I take back what I had said and

again I refused, and the switch descended upon me. This order of exercises was repeated until I felt the trickling blood on my back, but not until I rolled from the chair half lifeless, did he stop the "torture of the heretic." I did not say anything to my mother about it, but when I went to bed, she discovered my blood-stained clothing and knew by the groans I could not suppress and by my fever, that I was in great pain. The next day the doctor came and the news of my punishment spread through the town. The candy-maker, the direct cause of my suffering, called on me and after hearing my side of the story, left the house in a boiling rage. He went directly to school and thrashed the teacher so fiercely that he was in bed nearly as long as I was. Thus justice seemed to be meted out.

Some time after this, the candy-maker became ill from a painful and torturing disease. Death was coming in a very grim way to claim him. One day he sent for me. I was shocked by his wasted frame, his face pale and haggard, and his eyes looking into another world. He took both my hands and drew me to him, half over the bed, so that my face touched his bushy beard, and with trembling lips he began to make amends for the wrong he had done me. Trying to lead my own wayward little soul back the same way his was travelling, he said: "My boy, there is a God and I always knew it; I

denied Him with my lips, but in my heart I felt Him. I denied Him and Heaven and Hell, because I had grievously sinned against Him years ago, and I wanted to make myself believe that there was no God to punish, and no Hell in which to suffer. Now I can see it all, as clear as day." Then, embracing me with his trembling arms, he continued, "I denied my Saviour, Jesus, and that's the greatest sin of all; for He loves me, poor, wretched sinner, and I don't dare die without telling you how grievously I offended Him."

A paroxysm of pain took hold of him and they sent for the priest, that he might administer the last communion. I left the room, but lingered in the workshop, among half-finished cakes and dried up candy papers. My eyes wandered to the Bohemian newspapers, pamphlets and books, many of which I had read, and whose half-truths and lies had so misled me. Then came the solemn tinkling of bells, which announced the coming of the priest and the acolytes. I can hear it now—a high note and a low-toned bell, and the shuffling steps of those who came to minister in the name of a forgiving God. An austere look this smoothly shaven priest wore; as if he were a judge rather than an advocate. I followed him into the sick-room but I do not recall a word he said; yet the solemn chanting melody of those Latin phrases I have often in my ears. He left, and again the high

note and low-toned bell—dying away in the distance.

I stayed in that room until dusk; I think I waited more than two hours, and all the time the sick man cried in varying tones of agony: "*Yeshishe! Yeshishe! Boshe muy! Boshe muy!*" "Jesus, my Jesus!" "My God! My God!"

Then there was silence and the watchers lighted the candles.

XIII

MY FIRST LIBRARY

IN a country where brass buttons, gold braid and epaulets are of supreme consequence, the man who bore all these insignia of office was an important individual indeed. Of such a man our town boasted. Sheriff—Justice of the Peace—Tax-gatherer, he felt the weight of his onerous duties, or rather he let those feel it who did not pay proper respect to his lordship—the "*Kisbir*"—as this manifold official was called.

The sound of his drum woke the sleepy town, for it meant that such news as it needed to hear would be announced. Much too long for the news-hungry crowd did he continue the imperative beat upon his drum, and it was at such a time, when I crowded too close to him, that he played with his drumsticks on my head and did it hard enough to make a decided impression.

There were usually three classes of news announced: First: news of the state, which meant taxes; the date of prescription, or some new law to be enforced. Second: news of the church, which related to feast or fast days; local news which concerned lost dogs and their owners, cat-

tle which had been prematurely killed, whose meat was for sale at reduced prices, and lastly, the sale of property left by those who had no further use for their feather-beds, wash-tubs, sheepskin coats and kindred mundane things.

On this particular day, the crier informed us that the state would send its examining officers on the 26th of April and that all men of military age must present themselves at the town hall (which made mothers and sweethearts tremble and weep). He then announced that the late candy-maker's estate would be brought under the hammer, and that all those who cared to buy his furniture, tools of his trade or anything pertaining thereto, were invited to be at the market-place in front of the statue of St. Florian, at ten o'clock the next morning.

Of course, I felt myself personally concerned and while I should not have hesitated to buy some of the remnants of the candy-maker's stock in trade, what I really wanted, and wanted with all my heart, was his books and papers, reposing in a case, which I also coveted. The man who attended such auctions, as his business, was a Jew of unsavoury reputation, who kept a pawnshop and had all the characteristics which are supposed to go with that calling. He was there the next morning by St. Florian and with unerring eye had picked out the things which were worth buying. I was sure that among

them was the attractive bookcase, upon which my eyes lovingly rested. I had no money, beyond the few pennies which mother gave me and which I always managed to spend ; so I appealed to my brother, to whom I painted in alluring colours the wealth of literature contained in that library.

Feather-beds, tables and benches, cake pans and what not were scattered among the Gentile buyers without serious competition, but the fate of the bookcase, for which my brother began to bid, hung long in the balance—because when the pawnbroker discovered that another Jew wanted it, he scented big values. Not until the fabulous sum of twenty *florins* was reached did the drumstick fall, bringing the coveted treasure into my possession.

And what a commotion those books caused in our immediate family. My pious uncle was notified by the disappointed pawnbroker that a veritable arsenal of infidelity had come into my possession, and way into the small hours of that night the battle raged around it. The little bookcase stood upon the parlour table, its sliding doors warped just enough not to move without serious exertion on my part ; but each book was visible through the glass which had been washed and scrubbed for the first time in many years. While mother herself had many misgivings about the books, she resisted my guardian's attempt

to destroy them, and that very night, by the light from our new coal-oil lamp, I took an inventory of my first library. A bound volume of the Gartenlaube, a German illustrated weekly, in which I followed Marlitt's sentimental stories to their happy endings; a set of the works of Zschoke, a half forgotten Swiss author, whose stories and sketches teemed from the altruistic motive; Don Quixote, whose satire and irony I did not then understand; Auerbach's village stories, which not only disclosed to me sympathetically the virtues of German peasant folk, but helped me to follow their fortunes in America. This edition was illustrated, and on the banks of the Ohio, where the hero of that story had settled, the artist had drawn a tropic jungle of palms and bamboo, within which crouched fierce lions and fiercer looking wild men. That, however, was not the only time I found text and illustrations at logger-heads.

Of Schiller there was a broken set, "The Robbers," "The Maid of Orleans," and his early poems; of Goethe only the first part of "Faust," which I learned by heart, and each word of it has remained in my memory till now. The book which most impressed me and had the largest influence upon my life was Lessing's "*Nathan der Weise.*"

That drama of tolerance came to me with all its prophetic vigour; it spoke to me as I felt I must some day speak, and the story of the three rings,

spoken by the Jew Nathan, has remained the pivotal point of my philosophy of religion.

Unfortunately I fell heir in this collection to many books which were coarse in their language and brutal in their attack upon religion and certain phases of morality. They helped to confuse an already overstrained mind and awakened the man in me long before nature intended that I should cease to be a boy. Among the papers I found a number of copy-books, written full and close. They were an attempt at a diary or autobiography, written at odd times. Their frequent perusal made me so moody and introspective that my mother hid them from me and gradually I forgot all about them. Two years ago I visited my sister who has inherited the homestead and who, with rare filial devotion, has preserved the familiar objects of our childhood's life; although civilization has brought to our town modern furniture, antique rugs and even sectional bookcases, which have claimed much room for themselves. Upon the same table, I found the same bookcase and the same books—the latter all intact; for the generation of youth which followed me has become thoroughly Magyarized and is proud of the fact that it can't read German.

Every page to which I turned spoke to me, recalling my bitter-sweet boyhood, and I recognized that, after all, these books were the compass which guided my early life, although so often it seemed

without guidance, and many a time was fast upon the rocks. There I also discovered the long-lost copy-books. They were wrapped in a Bohemian newspaper and tied by mother's fingers with a bit of broad, white tape. I transcribe some parts of this autobiography; for the candy-maker, too, struggled against the current and helped draw me into the stream. Much of what he wrote is unprintable, for after all, he tried to write an honest autobiography. What I translated I have left unaltered, for it sounded so natural. He spoke as abruptly and to the point as he wrote.

XIV

THE CANDY-MAKER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"MAN, Know Thyself.

"I am not writing this because I ever expect any man to read it; if I were not so sure of that, I would not write so frankly as I do. Even as it is, I am not sure that I am going to tell everything about myself, for to be frank with one's self is very hard.

"I was born in a small village in Northern Bohemia. My father was a shoemaker, who had travelled a great deal as a journeyman. He spoke a broken German and, of course, the Czechish. He always smelled of alcohol, tobacco and leather. When he was sober he was gloomy, and if any one made a noise or displeased him in the least, he would grow angry and throw a boot or a last at him. When he was drunk he was jovial, sang lustily and was very affectionate. At such times my mother submitted to his embraces, but as soon as I was strong enough to run away from him, I ran; for his vile smell offended me. I think he loved me—in some such fashion as a man loves a dog, and it offended him because I would not be fondled by him.

"There is no such thing as natural affection; I certainly did not love my father. My mother I pitied. She was always bearing children—children she did not want—and not one of us ever thanked her for bringing him into the world.

"What men call love is lust,—what women call love is the natural desire for offspring.

"I was nine years of age when I got drunk. My father ordered me to drink and I drank as much as he wanted me to. When I got sober I hated my father for I knew he had wronged my nature; but I craved drink and I pretended to love him. He taught me that the Germans were the enemies of the Czechs, and that I must hate them. He gave me a glass of beer for throwing a stone into a German house. He told me that the Jews killed our God and that they were cursed by God for doing it. He gave me a glass of beer for taking pig's blood and marking crosses on the doors of the Jews.

"It is a poor God who lets Himself be crucified and a poorer God who curses His children.

"At twelve I was apprenticed to a baker. For a whole year I carried the baker's baby and did the drudgery of the household. The second year I carried rolls and bread from house to house and to the inns. I cheated the baker whenever I could. He gave me four *kreutzers*

on Sunday for spending money. I needed more and got it. I was as honest as he.

"This is the refuge of criminals and while it is not a safe one as far as the law is concerned, it is a good salve for one's conscience. At sixteen I went on the road, ostensibly looking for work, but I was looking at life. I discovered that the Germans, whom my father had told me to hate, had been taught by their fathers to hate me. Patriotism is an artificial virtue.

"At Bamberg I was thrown into jail, and a common woman was arrested with me. When I came out of jail she was waiting for me. She gave me a pocketbook with five marks in it. She had stolen it—for me. I did not take it and I did not go with her. She wept and tore her hair; she said she loved me.

"A harlot who sells herself for money to many men is no worse than the woman who sells herself to one man.

"I did not go with her because I could not match her devotion. After all, there is something in love; it sobered me.

"I went to work with a Jewish baker. He did not get drunk and he did not beat his wife; when he looked at her his face beamed and he was kind to her always. She was sick and he carried her to her bed as if she were a baby—her body

was shrivelled. It wasn't lust he felt, perhaps it was pity. He told me she had been sick since their only child was born. Miriam was sixteen years of age and pity does not last sixteen years. It must have been something better than pity.

"Miriam was growing into womanhood. It seemed that every day I saw her she grew lovelier. Yet I never thought about her body; it was her mind. She taught me how to read German —she opened the doors of a new world to me. We read many good books together. She told me to go to the theatre. I saw Romeo and Juliet.

"It was not Miriam's mind after all—it was something else. I know it was not her body—I desired something more. I loved her.

"I spoke to her father—he told me that I could not marry her for I was a Christian. I went to the rabbi. I wanted to be a Jew so I could marry her.

"It is hard to get into Judaism. I wonder whether it is hard to get out?

"A little drop of water makes a man a Christian no matter what he was. The Jews want blood.

"I was willing to give it but the baker journeymen heard about it and I was called before the guild. They drowned my love with beer. They awakened the beast within me. I became like my father—'*Bestia Sum.*'

"In the year 1865 war broke out and I, as an Austrian subject, was sent across the border. I was drafted into the army and taught how to kill the Prussians. That was all I seemed good for, and I did it as fast as the Prussians would let me. They had better guns and were sober; they had generals, we had the Hapsburghs.

"The Hapsburghs said, 'Let them come in,' and the generals came. Then the Hapsburghs said: 'We'll drive them out,' but they didn't. This was our last stand and we capitulated. I have stayed here ever since.

"I have capitulated to the Germans, to force and to reason. I shall never capitulate to the priest and to the church."

But he did.

XV

THE AMERICANS

THE town was looking up indeed; progress, that ceaseless traveller, who seems to skip continents and countries while appearing in remote towns or villages, came to us out of the same land from which had come coal-oil lamps, sewing-machines and the three-quarters of a man.

One day there alighted from the omnibus a man and his family, consisting of his wife, two sons and one daughter. When the man had shaken his cramped body into shape, he began to abuse the driver of the omnibus, the town and the country; while with a mighty oath composed of the hottest words taken from various tongues, he declared that he would send the omnibus to the scrap heap, the owner of that wretched vehicle to the poorhouse, and the driver to jail. Thinking over it now in my maturer years, I realize that they richly deserved his anathemas, although at that time, in common with our townsfolk, I thought the man presumptuous in criticizing this ark of ours, with its leather-covered body and the mud-bespattered lettering which declared in three languages that it was an omnibus and

that it connected our town with the far-away railroad, which it reached in time to catch the mixed train for Vienna. It did not set forth that it rarely arrived at Hodowin in time, which meant a wearisome wait of many hours in an ill-smelling waiting-room; nor did it tell of the terrors of the journey, of the driver who made it uncomfortable for the passengers by asking them to alight and push, unless he got a generous "*Trinkgeld*," and it certainly never told or could tell of the rapacious owner, who exercised all his powers as a monopolist over a defenseless public.

The strangers were expensively attired. From the man's shirt bosom flashed the first diamond I ever remembered seeing, and the woman had similar glittering stones in her ears. I was at once attracted by the boys, who, contrary to custom, jumped through the window of the omnibus to the ground without the aid of the foot-rest. This seemed to me a dangerous performance; but when the girl followed her brothers in the same fashion, all the onlookers including myself were shocked. My hungry brain or soul or whatever a boy may call the self, scented in these newcomers unusual mortals, and I was not disappointed.

The family came from an American city not many hundreds of miles from where I am now writing. The father had left there, ostensibly

on account of the rigours of the climate, but when visiting the town myself in later years, I found that his leaving was not a matter of climate but of police record. The family planned to remain until the father's health was restored ; which meant until a new and less rigorous administration should come into power where his misdeeds had been perpetrated. Originally he had been in the whiskey distilling business, which in Hungary, by its nature, encouraged roving and lawlessness. Both these qualities carried him to the United States, where evidently he had prospered but not reformed, and he was now back from where he started. The children had English names: Henry, Arthur and Maud. The girl's name sounded very strange when pronounced by those of us who did not know anything of the mysteries of the English language.

The boys were soon the terror of the town and the surrounding villages. They belied their Jewish ancestry both in their looks and their behaviour and broke through all barriers of race and class, proving a leavening influence for good or ill, according to the views held, to the boyhood of their generation.

To run races or to play ball were unknown pleasures, especially to the sedate Jewish lads. To play Indian, plan semi-serious hold-ups, to go about with bows and arrows and a self-conscious swagger—these were virtues or vices so new that

the whole region seemed to be turned topsyturvy, and everybody but myself heaved a sigh of relief when the strangers were gone. From these boys I learned a few English phrases, the first being contained in the classic lines of "Yankee Doodle." Many a puzzling thought I gave to those euphonious words "doodle" and "macaroni," whose meaning could not be translated to me, even by the boys, who could repeat the whole song forward and backward. Above all I bless their memory for having brought into my life Cooper's "Leatherstocking Tales," which they owned in a large, illustrated, German edition. That ozone from free airs stirred my whole system and seemed to purify me of all inborn fears and littleness. I felt the glow of campfires, the joy of the chase, the hardships of adventure, the fierceness of battles and battle-cries. I cast off, as if by magic, the burdens imposed upon me by race and faith, and became a pioneer in an untracked wilderness; I drew the first plowshare over my prairie farm and defended my blockhouse against the redskins; yes, even the fear of guns was taken from me, for I went with those American boys (carrying a borrowed gun, which was against the law) and killed a cat. With steady hand, I pulled the trigger while one of the lads held the ancient weapon. Then we proceeded to scalp the animal and did it, I suppose, Indian fashion. The height of surprises to

our Jewish community came, when the younger of the boys climbed a May-pole without apparent effort, after the Gentile lads had failed. How I trembled and triumphed for him, as the tree swayed with him at its graceful top; how proud I felt as he waved the ribbon he had taken from the goal, and when he reached earth again he seemed to have redeemed me from the reproach against my race; for the peasants said: "See what this Jewish boy did!" "How skillful he is and how brave!" I basked for a long time in the radiance of his triumph.

The father's influence on the adult male population was not quite as revolutionary or as wholesome. He had many tales to tell of far-away America, and in increasing numbers the younger men would gather with him at the inn, listening to his stories while he drew them into a friendly game of cards. To this day, in a small and reckless circle, the game of poker survives, although I suppose it is changed by its environment. By his convivial ways he also attracted the sporting element among the young Magyars who, like most mortals, lose their race prejudice in social excesses. If there was anything in the calendar of vices which was new and promised new sensations, the American visitor taught it to them, and they were apt pupils. No doubt it was this good fellowship which introduced him into our national politics. As he made his début in the first elec-

tion for Parliament which I witnessed, and no doubt the first in which American methods played an important part, it is worth describing.

At that time there were two parties in Hungary; the Government party and the Opposition. It was a foregone conclusion that the Government candidate would be elected: First, because the Government wanted him elected; second, because it completely controlled the machinery of the election. I doubt that any of the voters knew the difference between their parties, or if they cared to know. The Government prepared for a peaceful election. Tri-coloured flags, which pledged the peasants who had a right to franchise, were fastened to the straw-thatched roofs of the whole district and apparently nothing remained but the formality of counting the votes on election day. Suddenly there appeared, in ever-increasing numbers, the flags of the Opposition. Young stump speakers climbed upon fences sheltering images of the saints, or even upon their shoulders, and harangued the crowd. The inns were full of voters who drank *palenka*, which flowed as freely as water. Torchlight processions were formed and I owe my first sight of fireworks to this same exciting season, the stirring events of which linger so plainly in my memory. At last the Government party awoke to the fact that it would not have the usual "walk-away," and when election day came,

soldiers, both cavalry and infantry, marched into town. It was a fairly safe assurance that the *election* would go the right way, no matter which way the *votes* went. The town square was divided into halves by the infantry, and the whole surrounded by Hungarian Hussars whose gay uniforms dazzled the eyes.

In larger and larger numbers the peasants arrived, coming in groups, carrying their party banners. Long before they reached the town they had been befuddled by liquor to the degree that they were not afraid of infantry or cavalry, and boldly declaring their party, entered the left half of the square. The Government side, it is true, had in it the gentle folk ;—well-to-do merchants and landowners, and although their votes counted for more than the peasants', their numbers were few. The Opposition's side of the square was fairly bulging from its ever-increasing human mass, so that the soldiers had a hard time to keep it within bounds. Each voter had to pass through the voting booth and, much to the chagrin of the Government party, the Opposition had appointed watchers, who surrounded the ballot box. When night came, the Opposition candidate was declared elected in spite of various subterfuges of the Government party. It was a hideous and sleepless night in the town, for nearly everybody was drunk, and the police took especial delight in

beating the peasants with the butts of their guns. Yet the men sang and shouted, the successful candidate appeared and made a rousing speech and it was long after daylight when the last reveller was silenced and the town sank into its normal stupor.

Ever since, the Opposition candidate has been in the Hungarian Parliament and it is a pleasure to relate that, on the whole, he has been one of its ablest and most honest members, occupying many positions of trust and prominence, visiting the United States on a mission of peace and received as an honoured guest at the White House. He does not know, however, that he owes his first election to a Jew who learned his earliest lessons in the game of politics in a certain town in the Middle West of the United States; a town famous for its brand of whiskey and its corrupt city government.

The daughter of the American, three years my senior, took the place of the miller's daughter in my heart, and I think I loved her more than I loved Martha; for I was at the edge of a new life which came to me so early as to nearly overwhelm me by its force and power. While Maud was something of a "tomboy," she could think seriously, and to her I owe my first glimpse of Dickens. She had a copy of "Dombey and Son" in German and I devoured it in a few days, shedding countless tears over it. With

her I discussed my own problems of religion and race which overshadowed everything else in my life.

Her romantic vein was manifested when she inveigled me into going with her to visit the witch to have our fortunes told.

I was still mortally afraid of the old woman, for she was the typical witch, bent double, leaning on a staff, and ugly, with her face seamed by deep and curiously shaped wrinkles. She owned two ferocious black cats that were to me the personification of evil spirits. She lived in an isolated house by the creek and to reach it one had to pass a clump of ill-shaped willow trees, which fitted well into the gruesome atmosphere.

With fear and trembling I followed my American guide, for superstition is much more universal and more deep-seated than race characteristics. I felt like running away when we were in the circle of the willows, for in those crooked, gnarled, forked tree-tops, the witch was supposed to work her evil deeds. Maud drew me after her and we passed over the threshold, in doing which I stepped on one of the cats, thereby receiving a nervous shock from which it took me long to recover.

A fish-oil lamp filled the room with its vile odour, and when our eyes penetrated the semi-darkness, we saw the witch on top of the bake-oven. With many awful groans, she let herself

down to the ground, and after receiving her fee, which the reckless American girl had made unusually generous, she proceeded to shuffle a greasy deck of cards; then laid them on the dirty floor to discover what fate had in store for us.

Like all fortunes that are told to sentimental young women, and romantically inclined youths, the prophecy culminated in marriage. The cards told that I would travel very far and marry a rich young woman. Maud was to marry a poor man but was promised that happiness in love which is better than gold.

The prophecy had a marvellously stimulating effect on us both; we lost all fear, and a strange new feeling began to manifest itself, as we walked hand in hand into the oncoming night. When I reached home I dreamed my first dream about the future and the far-away land to which I was to travel. That of course would be America and the rich young bride would be Maud.

Our peasants used to say that dreams of marriage bring misfortune, and misfortune came apace. Suddenly Maud's father recovered his health and the family prepared to return to the large and luxurious home that had been so often described to me, from the big, sweeping lawn to the public school where Jews and Gentiles mingled, and from books and games to pop-corn and tomato salad, which latter seemed to me

rather barbaric luxuries. I was tragically unhappy and so gloomy that I threw myself on the bed, and mother, fearing illness, sent for the doctor. He felt my pulse, looked into my throat, prescribed some harmless pellets and left me to my gnawing agony which grew greater and greater as the hour for the departure of the omnibuses drew near. Now we had to speak of these in the plural; for the American visitor had financed a new omnibus, with cushioned seats and a regular door.

The bells on this new omnibus were twice as big as that on the old one, but they sounded funereal to me that morning. I meant to stay in bed and cover my head with a pillow, that I might see and hear nothing; I even hoped that I might die of suffocation; but as the bells drew nearer, the love of life—and the love of love gripped me. Leaving my bed, I dressed quickly, and before mother could prevent me I was running after the omnibus at breakneck speed. It had a fair start but I knew that at the Oresco Hill it would begin the slow climb upwards and I could catch it. Breathlessly I reached it after a run of miles. I jumped onto the step and when Maud saw me her face flushed from pleasure or anger, I cared not which. I clung to the door and looked piteously at her, begging her to take me to America. Her father and mother laughed at me and the boys laughed too; but she came

close to me while the vehicle swayed from side to side, and kissed my cheek, saying: "Good-bye; remember the prophecy." Then I lost my hold and slid to the ground.

For a long, long time the kiss burned upon my cheek; for it was not like the kiss of the miller's daughter.

XVI

THE CUP OF ELIJAH

"WHERE shall I put the chair for the Prophet Elijah, motherkin?" I was helping my mother prepare the Passover. This was no easy task, for the supper is a religious service as precise and solemn as high mass in a cathedral.

"Opposite the host and nearest the door, that he may step in and out unobserved," my mother replied, a wee bit of a smile playing upon her sad face. It was sadder to-day than usual, for the Passover is a family festival; the father is the high priest and master of ceremonies, and my father being dead, his brother, our pious Uncle Isaac, was to preside at the feast.

With a deep sigh, mother placed the shining brass candlesticks. In their graceful curves I could see my elongated face, much to my amusement. Then she arranged the dishes in their proper places, filling the huge pewter platter with unleavened bread which she covered with a bright cloth. On this in her maiden days, she had embroidered the triangular shield of David, and in Hebrew letters, the blessing spoken before the breaking of the bread. Then with skill-

ful fingers she divided the portions of bitter herbs and knowing my aversion to them, put at my plate the smallest quantity possible.

"Israel has had enough bitter herbs, in Egypt and out of it," she said. "I think the rabbis might have spared us this memorial. Do you hear those Gentile youths talking? That is our bitter herbs, and we may get more of them than we can eat."

There was danger of a mob that night, for the entire Gentile community was agitated over the alleged disappearance of a Gentile girl. Yet the Jews were hurrying past our house to the synagogue for the evening service. They were greeted by such pleasant words as: "How many Gentile children have you slaughtered?" "We'll drive you back to Jerusalem, where you belong."

No, we did not belong here. In spite of the fact that generations of mothers reared their children in this valley of the Carpathians, and generations of the young buried their aged in the God's Acre at the edge of the far-stretching town, we were still strangers and sojourners. To live here was a privilege grudgingly granted, and although death regarded neither Jew nor Gentile, our graves were dug in alien soil, and the God's Acre stood in disputed territory. We were such strangers in the land of our birth, that as a child I scarcely knew the colour of the sky

above me or the shape of the mountains which girdled the valley. The spring wind wakened flowers that never bloomed for me, and the song of the thrush and the nightingale was drowned in the chirp of the sparrows and the cawing of the ravens, of which alone I was conscious, because every man's hand was against them as it was against us.

Mother did not wish me to go to the synagogue service, so I helped her with the Passover feast. After the doors were bolted and the windows barred, she brought out the silver goblets from which generations of our ancestors had partaken of the Passover wine. With especial care, she unwrapped the richest and most massive one and giving it to me said: "Put it at the prophet's place." It was his goblet and never had been touched by the lips of a mortal.

"The Prophet Elijah," my mother continued, more to herself than to me, "is a guest whom we shall need to-night as never before." Even while she spoke, a stone was hurled against the shutters, the concussion breaking several window-panes.

"Mother!" I cried in great fright, "are you sure that the prophet will come?"

"I am quite sure he will come," she replied, "although I have never seen him."

I did not ask any more questions, for I knew her heart was heavy and I could see that she

was not far from tears. She now lighted the candles, thanking God that He had thus commanded, and then went to look after affairs in the kitchen; for prayers and Psalms were to alternate with delicious soup, fish, and roast lamb with all its accompaniments. At least a week is spent in preparation for the Jewish Passover. The home must be cleansed from cellar to attic, that even the slightest particle of leaven be removed. House cleaning before the Passover is an exacting religious ceremony, a marvellous provision for an Oriental people to which personal cleanliness came as the fiat of Heaven.

My mother was a daughter of Israel, who "looked well after the ways of her household," but as she lighted the match to set fire to the gathered leaven, I heard her say the usual prayer with great fervour. "We praise Thee, Lord our God, King of the whole world, for commanding us to burn the leaven."

At last my uncle came, his three sons with him, and breathlessly they told of the gathering mob and of stones crashing through the synagogue windows. Yet in spite of all this apprehension, my uncle put on the robes of his priestly office, girded his loins and praised God loudly for having delivered His people out of the bondage in Egypt. As we praised Him in prayers and hymns, so we praised Him in eating of the food He had provided; for were we not protected

by the invisible guest, the Prophet Elijah? Was not his goblet filled, although his chair was still empty?

Clearly and triumphantly my uncle sang the jubilant notes of Israel's redemptive journey from Egypt to the Promised Land while the rest of us timidly chanted the amens and hallelujahs. The villagers, attracted by the service, had gathered in front of our house in increasing numbers. Stones began to fly against the shutters and a crowbar was being applied to the bolts and hinges; yet undisturbed, my uncle, this high priest of Jehovah, continued the service, while we, more and more frightened, tremblingly murmured our parts.

At a certain point in the service, just before drinking the wine, a door is opened to the Prophet Elijah. This was my task and I always felt it a somewhat awful one. Now when the critical moment came, I could not move. I seemed petrified by fear, for the crowd, growing impatient, was making a fierce assault upon our front door. Then, at the moment of greatest suspense, the miracle occurred.

"Hello, good Christians!" cried a strong, resonant voice. "Is this your Easter celebration? Is this the way the risen Lord has taught you to treat your neighbours?"

"Your Reverence," we heard one of the mob reply, "they have slaughtered Anushka, the

daughter of the stone-mason, and they are now drinking her blood out of silver goblets. We want to avenge her death."

"You lie! It's a black, dastardly lie!" the voice replied. "Go to the Black Eagle inn, and you will find your Anushka in the arms of the judge. Now drop that crowbar, you young brute, and go to the Black Eagle, and if it isn't as I have told you, you may brand your pastor a liar. You youngsters, drop those stones and go home to your beds and thank God if you do not end your days in jail, you young ruffians!"

Slowly the crowd dispersed and our fears were quieted.

Then mother said to me: "My son, open the door for the Prophet Elijah." Without fear I sprang to obey and a man passed over the threshold, a gentle-faced man who walked softly towards the Passover table as though afraid of disturbing us. We looked at him in gratitude and astonishment.

"It is the pastor!" mother said, smiling her grateful welcome. "Sit down;" and he sat down in the chair of the Prophet Elijah. Then mother said: "Drink;" and he lifted the cup of the prophet reverently, glancing at the Hebrew letters engraved upon it. His lips barely touched it and he put it down again.

The pastor we knew only as a grave and gentle man who passed our house daily. He always

greeted my mother and she acknowledged the greeting by her prettiest courtesy; yet they had never spoken a word to each other. I had heard him preach in his church in my race unconscious days when, hidden among the bellows, I pumped the organ; and I knew the quality of his voice. I never knew what he preached about, or that his religion and ours had anything in common.

My uncle knew not what to do. Grateful he was for this timely interruption. Yet I think he would rather have been torn by the mob than have a Christian pastor interrupt our Passover service, sit in the hallowed seat of the prophet and drink from his cup, too sacred even for our lips. Mingled gratitude and displeasure were written on his face. The pastor rose and apologizing for his intrusion, said:

"I came in to tell you that the mob has gone and that I have found the girl whose disappearance caused all this trouble. I also wanted to tell you that I tried hard to keep the people from gathering; but I could do nothing to prevent it until I found Anushka. Of course you know that our religion does not teach hatred of the Jews."

My uncle, who had visibly shrunk from the pastor while he was speaking, said: "But, your Reverence, you have been sitting in the chair of our Prophet Elijah and drinking from his cup!"

"I drink of a cup like this at every Passover

celebration in my church," the pastor replied. "It is a cup hallowed by the lips of One greater than Elijah, One who believed that there should be no hate or war among God's children, and who gave His life to seal that truth."

"But there still is war, your Reverence, and there still is hate, and they are ready to kill us."

"I cannot answer for the mob, Isaac Bolsover, I can only speak for myself. I have faced a dozen mobs to-day to save your people, because this Prophet who was greater than Elijah has taught me to love my neighbours and even my enemies. I am here to-night in obedience to His command of love. I preach it, and I trust you believe that I practice it. I certainly did to-night. Some day all men are going to obey this command."

"You did that for our sakes? For Israel's sake?" asked my uncle with much feeling. "Then sit down."

The pastor lifted the prophet's cup, saying: "Isaac Bolsover, some day I hope we will be able to drink out of the same cup, in the kingdom of God." Then he sat down.

With wide-open eyes I watched this man who spoke a new language; a man of alien faith and blood, yet who spoke the things which were music to my young soul. He was not handsome, this Slavic pastor; yet that night he seemed to me supremely beautiful. My uncle's theological

interest had been aroused, and closing the prayer-book, open before him, he asked: "Your Reverence, what do you mean by the kingdom of God?"

"I mean," the pastor answered, "that a day will come when all the scattered shall be gathered again; when no barriers of race and religion shall divide; when the strong shall serve the weak, the rich shall succour the poor and when the chief delight of men will be to do the will of God. Then the word of the prophet shall be fulfilled, when he said: And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

"That is our Prophet *Yesias*, whom you are quoting," exclaimed my uncle. "Do you know what the rabbis say? Why that day of the Lord has not come? Let me tell you."

The pastor had risen, but he sat down again, and my uncle began his story from the Talmud, and being a Talmudist, he swayed back and

forth in rhythmic motion as the words of simple eloquence passed his lips.

"Rabbi Chamina, son of Pappa, taught thus: One day, the Holy One, blessed be His name, took the book of the law and said:

"'Every nation which has wrought for the sake of the fulfillment of the law may now appear before me and receive its reward.

"'Then all the nations gathered together and the Holy One, blessed be His name, spoke, saying: Let them come nation by nation, and that which is the worthiest shall receive the reward and shall lead the nations of the world, that they may become one.

"'The Assyrians came first, because they are the most ancient; and the Lord asked the Assyrians, What have you done to receive this reward of leading the nations of the earth, that they may become one? And they said, Lord of heaven and earth, we swept the earth with the besom of fury and broke the nations to pieces with the hammer of Thy wrath. We carved our name upon the hearts of men by fear, and chiselled upon the rocks with tools of iron, and we did it all that we might fulfill Thy law. And the Lord answered them and said, Ye have swept the earth with your fury that men might fear you; ye have broken the nations to exult in your own strength, and ye have carved your name upon the hearts of men and upon the rocks that it may not be

forgotten, but I am the Lord whom the nations shall fear, and ye were not afraid of Me, saith the Lord. And the Assyrians left the presence of the Almighty trembling and sighing.

"'The Roman nation came next because it is the mightiest and its fame is carried over the whole earth. And the Lord asked the Romans, What have you done to deserve this reward of leading the nations of the earth?

"'And they said: Lord, we have established many cities and have destroyed many; we have built market-places to buy and to sell; we have erected magnificent bathing-places and have heaped up silver and gold, and all this for the sake of fulfilling the law.

"'And the Holy One, praised be His name, answered them, saying: Ye fools of this world! Ye have done all this for your own sakes. Ye have established cities for your own glory and market-places for your own enrichment; ye have built baths for your own sensuous enjoyment and have heaped the silver and the gold for yourselves; but the gold and the silver are Mine, and ye have not brought them unto Me.

"'And the Romans left the presence of the Almighty, and the Persians appeared, and the Lord asked them, saying: Ye Persians, what have ye done to receive the reward of leading the nations of the earth to become one nation?

"'And they answered Him, saying: Lord of

the world, we have built bridges and fortresses and have fought many bloody battles; we have led nations captive and wiped them from the face of the earth—all, that we might fulfill the law.

"'And the Lord answered them: Ye have done all this for yourselves. Ye have built bridges to gather the toll, and fortresses to exact tribute; but I am the God of war, and ye have never made Me the captain of your hosts.

"'And the Persians left the presence of the Almighty with fear and trembling.

"'Then the Greeks appeared before Jehovah, and He asked them, saying: What have ye done to deserve this reward? And the Greeks answered Him and said: Lord of Heaven and Earth, we have built costly temples upon the mountains and planted groves in the valleys and filled them with beauty. We emptied the cup of wisdom and filled it with the wine of joy, all that we might fulfill Thy law. Then the Lord answered them: Ye have built the temples for the creatures of your imagination; ye have filled the silence of the groves with the children of your passion. Ye have drained the cup of wisdom and filled it with the wine of pleasure, and ye have forgotten that I am the God of wisdom, and that in doing My will is pleasure for the soul. And the Greeks also went away, and shame and confusion covered them.

"'So the Lord gathered all the nations and

found none which had done aught because it wanted to fulfill the law. All had lived, struggled, fought and heaped up wealth to satisfy their own selfish desires.'

"The words of the prophet," my uncle concluded, "shall not be fulfilled until a nation arises which lives to do His will, which obeys His law; which if it creates cities, creates them for His glory; if it builds bridges, builds them to serve Him better; if it goes to war, goes to liberate the oppressed."

"There is such a nation, Isaac Bolsover," the pastor said, evidently astonished by this quotation from the Talmud so eloquently elaborated by my uncle,—"just one. It has fought a great war to liberate slaves, it professes to build cities to His glory; it receives all the strangers who come to it, when they flee from the wrath of the mob or the avenger. That nation is America. It is far away from us and we know little about it; but I believe it is the nation which will keep itself worthy to receive the reward, and that it will lead the nations into brotherhood.

"Good-night," he said, rising from the prophet's chair, with the prophet's glow upon his face. "May you have a peaceful Passover, and remember that the prophet's word shall be fulfilled."

I had never seen my uncle so erect as when he stood to say good-bye to the pastor. For a mo-

ment he seemed caught by a great current, which lifted him from his isolation into a large world movement. "Good-night, and may God reward you for the kindness you have done to Israel this night."

I held out my hand to the pastor and he took it gently; it was a soft hand, almost like a woman's, but its touch was full of throbbing life, and by a sudden impulse I kissed it.

Hardly had the pastor gone, when my uncle resumed his chanting and read the closing prayers. Sleepily but happily we responded with hallelujahs and amens.

Before he left us my uncle pointed to the cup of Elijah and said to my mother: "That wine is unclean and so is the cup. The lips of a Gentile have touched it."

Ah, mother of mine! how she rose in her gentle, womanly dignity as she replied: "He had a right to drink from it. Was he not our Prophet Elijah, and was he not sent from Jehovah to deliver us?"

When my uncle had gone and I was in bed, my eyes almost closed in sleep, my mother came to me, bearing in both hands the cup of Elijah.

"Drink from this cup, my son," she said; "for the lips of a living prophet have touched it"—and I drank from the cup of Elijah.

XVII

THE TRAGEDY OF RACE

OUR physician was the one Jew who could travel on the Sabbath and neglect the other ceremonial duties of his religion without being strongly criticized or mildly cursed. Relieving pain and saving life were naturally placed above the law ; so Dr. Blau, the best physician of that whole district, travelled in his carriage on the Sabbath, and when beyond the town boundaries had even been known to light a cigar. Although this sin was unforgiven, the community did not dare bring the doctor to account, for indeed, he was not only a good physician, but a good Jew in the best sense of the word. He was loyal to his race in spite of the fact that his profession took him into the best Gentile homes, where his skill and sympathetic spirit broke down race barriers, and he was accepted as an equal. His wife and the other members of his family shared in this immunity from religious observances and took more liberties than he, in spite of the fact that travelling on the Sabbath and non-attendance at the synagogue were not made necessary by their errands of mercy. As they wished to share in the larger social opportunities

enjoyed by the head of the house, the children were not sent to the Jewish school, but had French and English governesses. They were taught all the social graces including dancing, but were rarely able to make use of their accomplishments, for Gentile society was practically closed to them, and Judaism had no society. It was a simple democracy in which the pious and righteous alone were exalted, and they did not dance, neither did they speak French or English.

The most ambitious member of the family was the "Gnaedige Frau Doktorin" as she loved to be called, and a gentle soul like the doctor—an idealist from the top of his bald head down to his toes—yielded all too readily to her scheme of bringing up the family in such a way as to separate it from Judaism and the Jews without in any way uniting it to another religious group. In a measure at least, the "Gnaedige Frau Doktorin" succeeded in her plans, for the young Gentile snobs did not seriously object to visiting her well-appointed home, to eating her cakes and drinking her coffee, flirting with Adèle, her beautiful daughter, or even to leading her son astray, if he needed any leading in that uncertain direction.

The son left little or no impression upon my mind—no more than a chilly blast of air or a passing unpleasant odour; not so with his sister Adèle. She was more than twice my age; all the Orient had been educated out of her face and

form, but it lingered in her eyes and burned in her passionate nature. I often passed the house of the doctor and caught many a glimpse of its luxuriant interior. I nearly always saw Adèle at the piano and stopped to listen. She rarely spoke to me, for she had been trained not to speak to Jews of whom she was supposed not to be one. She played with vigour and feeling, her music soothed me and spoke to me as nothing else could, and I lingered by her window often and long. One day, shortly after I had been bereft of my American friends, she played and sang Schubert's Serenade, and I well remember the hot tears rolling over my cheeks as those mellow notes struck at every one of my sore heart-strings. Strange to say, there were tears in her eyes too when she came to the window to cool her glowing cheeks, and when she saw me crying, my sympathetic emotion naturally drew us together. Before she closed the window she said: "Come in any time you want to, little boy, and I will sing and play for you."

There was a soft cushioned divan upon which she always asked me to sit when I came, and I soon regarded it as my rightful place. I never taste any of the luxuries of life without recalling the first time I sank onto that cushioned seat after sliding to it over the highly polished floor. I do not believe that I could have been much inspiration to her, except perhaps as she saw my face

light up at her joyous notes, or saw tears in my eyes when, with her soft alto voice, she sang the sadder German songs for which I especially yearned. I was a "melancholy Dane"—as I think all children are whose experience has outrun their years.

One winter's evening when I called unexpectedly—for my visits were always in the daytime—I found my seat occupied by a young man. Other eyes than mine watched Adèle's skillful fingers and looked at her as I had never seen a man look at a woman. He was the postmaster's assistant, a Slavic youth belonging to a rich peasant family. He had entered government service by virtue of his father's money and the fact that he became a Magyar, half-traitor to his race, and wholly conscious of it. He drew me to him on the cushioned seat and said something that made Adèle smile. I blushed, became uncomfortable, and ran out of the room as fast as the slippery floor would permit.

For a long time after that I did not stop at Adèle's window. A sort of boyish jealousy kept me away, and besides, she now played only the joyous songs of her repertoire, for which I did not especially care. It may have been a long time or it may have been but a few weeks—time meant little to me then—when, in passing the house one afternoon, I heard her play again one of my favourites. I stopped but did not cry—for

music had lost some of its mystery. When she had finished she saw me and came to the window and I noticed that she had been crying. She closed the window without speaking to me, which hurt me deeply, and the next time I passed I did not stop, in spite of the fact that I heard her singing "Du holdes Aug"—a most lachrymal song and one of my favourites. For many days after this the window remained closed and I heard no more music. At my home they were speaking in whispers about Adèle. I did not understand, but the assistant postmaster was involved. Whenever the gray-haired doctor passed, and mother saw him, she said: "Dear man, he is carrying a load." When I asked what the load was that he carried, she said, "You are too little, you can't understand."

In spite of the fact that there was no music, I looked into the window every time I passed, which was oftener than necessary, for I wanted to see Adèle. Weeks and weeks elapsed and I caught no glimpse of her; indeed, I never saw any one in the room. One day, after a fruitless search through the window, I met her right at the door, ready for a walk. I doffed my cap and looked into her face, which had grown thin and pale. When she saw me she smiled and took my hand. I walked by her side—not daring to speak. There were two avenues leading out of town, and both afforded some pleasure, for

they were shaded. Both led to the cemeteries, one to the Jewish God's Acre and one to where the Gentiles rested; although a high stone wall separated the dead who died in the faith of the Church of Rome from those who professed the faith of Luther. These walks were our Lovers' Lane as well as the Via Dolorosa. Here troths were plighted, lovers kissed or quarrelled, and here weeping mourners followed the bier. Holding my hand firmly in hers, as if she needed support, Adèle and I walked out through the Allè, as this promenade was called. Under the gnarled acacia trees scattered benches stood, and at the further end, the Jewish cemetery began. Adèle sat down on one of the benches, drew a letter from her pocket and wept bitterly as she read it. Moved by her tears, I wept with her. At last she rose and we went to the God's Acre. It was not an inviting place, this "*Getot*" as the Jews called it; for grave crowded grave, and one moss-grown stone leaned upon the other. Nowhere was there a straight line, a curve that suggested beauty, a plot of ground which spoke of care. The Jewish cemetery was outwardly as confused and individualistic as the Jewish community; but beneath the surface what perfect harmony and order! A Gentile woman kept the gate and provided vessel and towel for the ceremonial washing. No visitor leaves the abode of the dead without this purification. The

woman watched our entrance with interest, for she did not provide the water and the towel for nothing.

The Jewish cemetery is hilly. On top of the hill they bury the pious and the learned; at the bottom the unlettered and the very poor. We climbed the slope and sat down on one of the graves. Adèle stared at me and at the headstones, nervously pulled weeds from the ground, then suddenly left me and walked rapidly away.

That evening I heard them say at home that a rich Jewish landowner was coming to see Adèle, and that they would be engaged, in order to prevent her marrying the Gentile. This interested me so much that I met the omnibus the next morning and had my first look at the stranger. He was a rather clumsy, homely, honest-looking man of nearly thirty years, whose gait and gesture smacked of the soil, and who, in spite of his good clothing, showed lack of breeding. A marriage agent was with him, and they went directly to the doctor's house. The same evening it was reported that the engagement was announced and that the marriage would take place in six weeks.

I was present at the ceremony. It was performed according to Jewish custom, in the open air. The synagogue yard was crowded, and the busybodies talked and talked. They really had something to talk about, for the bride had to be fairly lifted from the carriage, and the doctor had

grown years older. The pompous "Gnaedige Frau Doktorin" alone held her head erect and did not weep.

An orthodox Jewish wedding ceremony is a sadly solemn occasion. The groom wears his shroud and the bride's head is covered by an impenetrable veil. The rabbi reads the ceremony in the Hebrew Chaldaic dialect which no one understands, the cantor chants a solemn tune and the parents walk about the bridal couple weeping and praying. Never before was there a wedding in our town so solemn as this, and when the bride lifted her veil to drink from the ceremonial cup, her face looked like that of a corpse.

The next morning, long before daybreak, sounds of weeping and lamentation came from the house of the doctor. We heard the mad shriek of an insane woman, then a man lifted his voice in a heart-broken wail, and all who went to the door and all who heard the cause, wept with them. The old doctor, broken-hearted, stood by his daughter's bed, holding her lifeless hand in his; thus he stood, until the pious women came to prepare her for burial. When the pale morning grew bright and the Gentile community wakened to its tasks and duties, a shot was heard in the post-office. Through the crowd gathered there, an old peasant and his wife forced their way. Beside the desk where he had worked, lay their son—with a bullet in his brain.

XVIII

THE FIRST APOSTASY

WE who lived in the town were the envied of our race who lived in the scattered villages among the mountains. We had the synagogue, the centre of spiritual and social life, and we had the school. In spite of the fact that many of our Jews hated one another because of business competition, there was a community interest which held all of them together—making them, in a measure, share the common joys and certainly the common griefs.

We had no aristocracy except that of piety and learning and in this the poor excelled the rich ; so that life, such as it was, with its dangers and drudgeries, was shared life—and thus became bearable.

The village Jew had cause to envy us. He lived isolated among an alien and often hostile population, whose social pleasures he could not share, even had he cared to. If he lived near enough, he came to the synagogue each Sabbath, taking steep climbs over many rough miles ; but more often he could come only on the holy days, for distances were great and the means of commu-

nication difficult. The term "Village Jew" was synonymous with crudity and ignorance; in fact, the life of such an one did not differ much from his peasant neighbour, except in a few important particulars. The peasant *drank palenka*. The Jew *sold* it to him; the peasant consequently grew poorer and poorer while the wealth of the sober Jew increased correspondingly. The peasant had no ambitions beyond his meat and drink, while those of the Jew were boundless, and although he could not achieve much more than the accumulation of moderate wealth, the future of his children was assured to such a degree that he did not fear their being condemned to the life of a "Village Jew."

The children came to school in town, which was no little burden upon our community, but a burden which was gladly borne. In spite of the fact that the "Village Jews" were better off than the peasants, many of them could not afford to pay their children's tuition and board, which the town Jews provided by free scholarships and by a very unique scheme of "boarding 'round."

At the beginning of the school year, parents went to the homes of the well-to-do and secured in each a certain day in the week on which the child would be a guest at table. This provided a variety of boarding places; a fact which had obvious advantages and disadvantages.

Our home was open to this invasion Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and it was the "Sabbath boy" as we called him, whose pathetic career had a lasting influence upon my life.

He came from the village of "Deephole," a Slavic community, so hidden in the hills that not even its church steeple was visible from the main road. His father was a whiskey distiller and usurer, and the home smelt of vile liquor, which the peasants consumed in great quantities on the premises. On Sundays it was the scene of drunken brawls, which followed the weekly dance. The boy's bed was underneath the table around which his father's guests drank and made merry, and when the room was vacated, which was usually late at night, he went to sleep, breathing until morning the filthy, alcohol-laden air.

Nor were his waking hours much happier. His father, who was quick tempered, believed and practiced King Solomon's advice to parents; while the mother did not have sufficient strength of character to shield her children from his brutal assaults.

When the boy came to town, he came into a new world and when he came to our home it was indeed to him a Sabbath of delight; for he was a growing boy who never had got enough to eat and our table was bountifully supplied. He was an ill-favoured, freckled, hook-nosed lad,

extremely sensitive and shy. He never answered any questions beyond yes, or no, as if loath to lose any time from the process of filling up.

The Jew scarcely ever expects to be thanked for favours extended, so we were not at all astonished when, after feeding the Sabbath boy for four years, he dropped out with no word of acknowledgment, and another half-starved village child took his place.

Rabbinic law proscribed that walking on the Sabbath be restricted to 2,000 yards from the synagogue. These were marked out by wires, stretched across rather frail looking poles.

How many generations of children had been hemmed in by these rusty wires I do not know; but the beckoning fields in the spring, the butterflies, the corn-flowers and the poppies were mightier than the rabbinic law, and many a time I drew my mother past the boundaries, out into God's open world. I delighted to watch the peasants at work in the field, and it took the firm hand of my mother to keep me from going to aid them at haying time, or when they lifted the heavy sheaves of rye upon their huge wagons, drawn by white, long-horned oxen. I do not know how many sins I was guilty of each Sabbath afternoon, for I loved to pluck the wild flowers and that was a sin repeatedly committed. I whistled secular tunes which no doubt was another; I ran many godless miles beyond the

boundary, chasing rabbits and often stopping to read inscriptions upon the Christian shrines.

Ah, me! if only all my sins had left such unstained and pleasant memories. On these Sabbath walks I drew my mother into the villages which lay around us, and from which came our "day-eaters" as the charity boarders were called. We often stopped to inquire for them; but I fear my interest was wholly selfish, for invariably we were offered some refreshments, and in spite of my æsthetic delights in these Sabbath afternoon walks, they made me hungry.

Once we went to the village of Deephole. The wretched *isbas* crowded about the village church. Pigs, babies and geese bathed indiscriminately in the muddy pond; wrinkled, toothless old women were breaking flax, while drunken peasants reeled out of the inn towards which we did not need to inquire our way.

Two rickety steps led up to the door, on which was a faded sign, stating that the government gave license for the sale of tobacco. A shrill bell announced our coming when we opened the door. The air was heavy from ill-smelling tobacco smoke, which helped to make the other stenches at least bearable. A wooden enclosure, reaching from the beaten earth floor almost to the ceiling, fenced in the bar, where a Gentile girl measured out *palenka*, for on the Sabbath a Jew may not engage in business; hence the

proxy. Watching her, as an eagle watches her prey, was the Jewess, her smooth false front and clean dress being signs of the holy day.

When she recognized my mother she fell weeping upon her neck; mother wept too, although not knowing why and I began to whimper and cry in sympathy. The Gentile bar maid took an ancient looking stick of candy out of an open jar and, giving it to me, assuaged my grief. The Jewess locked the bar, temporarily suspending business, and drew my mother into the adjoining living-room, a third of which was occupied by a bake-oven, which served as bed for a fair share of the large family. On top of the oven lay the husband—paralyzed. His black eyes seemed to be the only members of his body that he could move and they were pathetic in their mute helplessness and appeal for sympathy. I caught but snatches of the story as it was told my mother. It was all about our "Sabbath boy." "He ran away from home—the father, God forgive him, was too hard on him." Not a line came from him—not a sign of life. When the peasants came home from their annual pilgrimage to the Shrine at Maria's Bosom, they told how they had seen a freckled, hook-nosed acolyte there, who looked just like the little "*schid*" that ran away. The same evening his father started for the town, walking, without stopping and without eating. Day after day the

mother waited but no word came from her husband. She closed her home and started after him, taking the children with her. When they came to the town and inquired for him, she was led to a hospital in which Sisters of Charity walked about noiselessly. "So kind they were to think of it," and they took her gently to a cot on which lay the motionless body of her husband. All he said, and that in a laboured, painful whisper, was: "Hashel has been baptized." There the story ended, and as various things needed to be done for the sick man, mother did them.

Then she took my hand and led me back. Not once did she permit me to pluck a flower, or chase a rabbit, and for a good many Sabbaths after that I did not go beyond the rabbinic limit.

XIX

A SECTARIAN CONTROVERSY

EIGHT O'CLOCK on a winter's evening. Officially it was night and the silence was broken by the night watchman's horn—a long, tubular instrument, made from the bark of a tree. The official night lasted until four o'clock in the morning, and from 8 P. M. to 4 A. M. the hours were more or less regularly announced by these same doleful blasts. They were intended to serve various purposes. First, of course, to assure old and young that the arm of the law watched over them and that its eyes were open; which, however, was not always true. Secondly, to warn evil intentioned persons; which no doubt it accomplished, for the blasts could be heard miles away. Lastly, they were intended to indoctrinate all of us, religiously and patriotically; for after each hour's call, the watchman sang a song which varied much according to whether Roman Catholics or Lutherans were in power; whether Slav or Magyar held the reigns of local government.

The song as I first knew it was something like this, and was sung in Slavic.

"The day has gone, the night is here,
The work is done, oh! do not fear.
Saint Florian your house will keep,
Saint Johan he will guard your sleep,
Saint Nepornuk will watch the streams.
The saints, they all will pray for you,
The Virgin intercede for you,
Now go to sleep, the Lord's awake,
And plan no sin, for Jesus' sake."

I am sure there were two closing lines which summed up the prevailing theology, but I do not remember them.

For many years, this orthodox song put us to sleep, and a similar one, just as piously solicitous, awakened us, and neither Lutheran nor Jew objected to its Roman Catholic phraseology. With the general nationalistic awakening, however, there was a closer drawing of religious and racial lines, and when the town elected a Lutheran Burgomaster, he appointed a night watchman who also was a Lutheran. While there was no change in the blasts from the wooden horn our slumber song was robbed of its poetry. Into the night the watchman called a few cold verses in which neither Saint nor Virgin had a part. Hardly had he thus boldly shown his departure from the traditions of the past, when a well-aimed stone struck his lantern and another one his head. He was stripped of his halberd, the symbol of his office, and left unconscious through many an hour, while the town remained unguarded against its invisible foes.

The next day, the Burgomaster was besieged by requests from the priest and many important citizens of the town to reinstate the Catholic watchman ; but this he refused to do. The same night the watchman was guarded by the *Kisbir* until past midnight, and was unmolested as, protected, he blew the hours. He did not blow the waking hour, for after his guard left him his Catholic enemies fell upon him again and he was too badly beaten to rise from the ground. That day he resigned his office and the Catholic watchman patrolled the streets. It was a great relief, even to a non-partisan Jew, to hear the skillful blast and the good-night song with all its saintly flourishes. I went to sleep at nine, but no one heard the ten o'clock horn. The watchman was beaten insensible by the Lutherans, who were practicing the Mosaic law—"an eye for an eye." For many weeks the battle raged, until a compromise was made. The watchman was to sing his Catholic song only in front of the priest's house, that of the *Pany* and a few other dignitaries. The Lutheran song was to be given before the Lutheran parsonage and such houses as he knew to be safely heretical. He was allowed full liberty in the Jewish part of the town. This worked fairly well the first and second nights, but the third night, many of the citizens met to celebrate the peace achieved, and the night watchman drank first with a Catholic and then with a

Protestant and when he went out into the night he blew his blasts erratically; faintly at first, afterwards as if not quite sure of the number blown—then he began to sing—the full old version of his song—in front of the Lutheran pastor's house. Recovering himself, he sang it in its abbreviated and rationalistic form, on the market-place and in front of the *Pany's* house.

At nine o'clock he was surrounded by a crowd of loafers, who led him up and down the town, blowing his nine blasts, and after each one giving full swing to the old time song which now had become a battle-cry. At ten a larger crowd rescued him from amidst his co-religionists, and after each blast made him sing the Lutheran version; at eleven o'clock they still held him. At twelve the Magyar youths took him in hand and compelled him to sing a Magyar song. They kept him until two, when the combined Lutheran forces took possession of him and at four he was permitted to waken the already sleepless town. The next night the watchers and defenders of the faith heard the eight too hoos, but no song. Nine o'clock and again the ominous silence; at ten an awful howl arose, which came from Catholics, Lutherans, Magyars and Slavs. A fearful thing had happened—the Burgomaster had appointed a Jewish night watchman and before morning every window in every Jewish home was broken

—a pious and gentle protest against this insult to Christendom.

The Jew threw away his horn and halberd and another took his place, but he had solved the problem. Night was never again officially announced by a song; all one heard was the eight doleful blasts and then silence until it was time to blow the other hours. That was the first time in my life that I thought seriously about the problems of Christian unity.

XX

THE HOUSE OF THE POOR

THE poor who lived in "The House" were few, for the Jewish home is rarely broken up, no matter how galling the poverty, and family ties bind and obligate its stronger members even through far removed cousinships. The permanent residents were :—Two old, scolding, toothless women, an epileptic boy—some one's illegitimate offspring, a burden to himself more than to any one else, and the caretaker, who was also grave-digger, his wife and children. The House of the Poor was open day and night to those who wander up and down the land ; unfortunates, wanderers, beggars, paupers, who keep Jewish benevolence active, often straining it to the breaking point.

The *Schnorer*, as he is called, is a gentlemanly sort of beggar. He is rarely in rags, is tolerably clean, and every house in which a Jew lives is his ; he enters it without knocking—never asks for alms, yet is always sure of a gift. He does not tell a hard luck story, but should he tell one, it would be an almost exact duplicate of that which another *Schnorer* had told before him. It is a story which has as its key-note persecution ;

its minor details are: destruction of house by fire, blindness, consumption, and the begging of a dowry for a marriageable daughter. These are some of the ills of Judaism, which chronically afflicted those who passed through the House of the Poor. I heard them tell of the fires of hate, which destroyed straw-thatched cottages, business, virtue, old age and youth. I heard racking coughs, felt the groping touch of the blind, and listened to wise men trying to balance this world upon the needle points of rabbinic exegesis. I do not recall that I ever saw a cheerful face nor heard laughter, nor do I remember that any one wept. After all, misfortune was to many a business asset, even as pious learning was; and in this, the people in the House of the Poor proved that they were typical humans. I fear that I went there more than my mother wished me to go, and more perhaps than was good for me; but I went to listen to the *Schnorers'* tales. They knew Europe, from Hamburg to Constantinople; knew each wealthy Jew, how much he gave, and they measured his chances of Heaven by his gifts to them. They also knew the good places to stop over the Sabbath, and what seat to take in the synagogue in order to catch the eye of those benevolent worshippers who invited *Schnorers* to share the Sabbath goose.

These were not the worst things with which I became acquainted. The poor indulged in gam-

bling, they drank *palenka*, and I saw and heard many things whose horror I felt but did not clearly understand. It was a great clinic in poverty, although doubtless I was too young to attend its classes.

The epileptic boy was my special friend; he was much older than I, as in fact were all my friends. His malady took peculiar forms. Before each attack he would wander off, and when he passed under the spell of the disease he had most wonderful hallucinations. He saw visions and declared them eloquently and poetically. Many a time I have seen him rise from the gutter and speak an hour to an ever-increasing crowd, which, although it did not understand him, was held by the spell of his eloquence.

One day a *Schnorer* told about the city of Hamburg through which he had *schnorred*. He expatiated upon its rich and poor, its delicious fish, its *schnaps*, and the great ships he had seen, full of passengers sailing for America. Then each of the *Schnorers* told something of that far-away country, its fabled wealth and wonderful possibilities. Their stories fitted into my dissatisfied mood, and that evening, when the epileptic proposed our running away to America, I readily assented.

There is, I suppose, a natural restlessness which every lad feels at a certain age; it is the flitting instinct, the desire to leave the nest and

try one's own wings; to me that feeling came often, and this time with irresistible force.

We made no elaborate plans—youth is so optimistic. My companion was a wanderer upon the face of the earth, and when he promised to see me safe and sound in America, I was as sure of it as if America had been the next village, a mile away.

Early in the morning I left my home and was joined on the highway by the epileptic. Before sunrise we were on the outskirts of the town. A hackman, driving to the nearest railroad station with an empty coach, took us as passengers, and I paid him all the ready cash in my possession, trusting that once at the station, Hamburg and America would be within easy reach.

I had some rolls in my pockets which made our dinner, and when night came we had reached the railroad and heard the buzzing telegraph wires and the puffing of a far-away engine. The third class waiting-room was full of its queer and crude mixture of humanity.

Hard-faced and hard-fisted men, going to the city to work and seek their fortune; women, bent nearly double by the loads upon their backs, linen and embroideries for sale among the city folk; insolent young men surrounding young girls who bravely resisted the assaults upon their purity.

I have often seen that picture since and

breathed the same foul atmosphere; but never again has it been as terrible as it was that night. The mixed train for Vienna came, and when we tried to board it without tickets we were arrested as vagrants, and thrown into the town jail.

A jail at best is no place for a child, and this jail was never fit for any human beings. There were at least thirty people in a comparatively small room, and in that miscellaneous crowd there were half a dozen women. When we entered, the inmates had just begun to make ready for the night and were fighting among themselves for places nearest the stove, as it was a cool autumn evening. Animals are never fiercer than these men were. Oaths in a dozen languages and dialects filled the putrid air; races and classes united against each other; the Slavs cursed the Magyars, and they together beat the Jews and drove the Gypsies into a corner by themselves.

The women fought like tigers; they had to, for the men were assaulting them and there was no protection but their inborn sense of virtue, which is a mighty force in women, even in the lowest. One girl, who had the hardest fight, was a young Gypsy. She beat, scratched, kicked and drove off more than a score of men, who were awed as much by her indomitable courage as by her brute strength.

We came into the jail crying; at least, I remember that I cried, and both of us were shak-

ing from the cold and sick from hunger. We remained unnoticed in the mêlée, but when our cries grew louder, an old hag, a bony, rough-looking creature, heard us. "*Boshe muy!*" she cried when she saw us. Then, realizing our condition, she fed us cold cabbage out of a black, earthen pot. The women quarrelled as to who should care for us during the night. I went to sleep with my head upon the old hag's lap; she did not have room enough to lie down full length. I closed my eyes amid the subdued struggle and my unsubdued grief.

Early in the morning, before dawn, I was awakened by a tumult of voices. My epileptic companion was standing on top of the cold stove, speaking and wildly gesticulating. The men and women listened in amazement as his confused speech rose to a pitch of eloquence. I wish I could remember just what he said, but I know that I, in fact every one, felt as if the jail had grown larger and the air purer. We actually saw the pictures he drew.

One of them was a fire—yes, the *Pany's* house was burning—the *Kisaszonka*, his beautiful daughter, was behind the barred windows and the epileptic would save her. He strained his muscles and the veins of his thin arms swelled as the surging blood filled them.

"Here she was, in her raiment of white, like a twig of rosemary, fragrant and pure—he had

rescued her, and who had a right to marry her but he, her saviour?"

Then he drew for us a battle-field; bullets flew, the air was thick from powder smoke, the enemy was advancing, the general, a prince, was on his white charger leading his army to kill and drive back the invaders. "Behold! A swift riding Kozak. He rises in his stirrups and draws his sword. It hangs over the head of my beloved prince—it is ready to fall! I must save my prince! Ride on horse! On and on!"

He drew his imaginary sword, and swung it with all his might. "Ha! the Kozak sinks, cloven in twain!"

There stood the epileptic before us, more than half the watchers not understanding what he said; yet all hanging upon his words. Then, like a wounded soldier he sank upon a bench, and slipped to the floor. His pale face was covered by perspiration, he foamed at the mouth, he ground his teeth, and every muscle of his body seemed to be straining and struggling against its encircling tension.

It was now daylight, and the jailor called our names. I responded to both, and pushing through the crowd, saw my brother, who had come after me. Before he bought me my breakfast he gave me the severe beating which I so richly deserved.

The next night I was safe in my own quiet, clean, white bed, and mother was talking to me. She

told me again the story of my birth and my babyhood, the pain I had caused, the little pleasure I had brought, and now she was going to send me away to school. Although I was desperately tired, I did not go to sleep, for it was the closing chapter of my boyhood's life.

Years later, a great, gruff, German teacher, after telling us of the pains of motherhood, looked at us fiercely and cried: "You're not worth it! Not a mother's son of you!" And I felt sure that I was not.

XXI

OUT OF THE OMNIBUS

EVERYBODY cried; even our servants and the neighbouring peasants, and indeed it must have been a pathetic sight, to see a lonely little boy, packed in among all sorts of people, venturing out into the far world by way of the omnibus.

It was very difficult, this going away to school. All our relatives had to be convinced that it was not a terrible tempting of providence. Many remained unconvinced, and their prophecies of dire consequences were not reassuring.

The fitting out was upon a generous scale. Seamstresses were busy and the tailor, a deaf mute, measured me in his rough way, making notches upon long, paper tape; for he couldn't read even figures. Fortunately, clothes, so long as they were generously large, were regarded as satisfactory. What did not fit me then, might, another year. Feather-beds and pillows whose contents had been contributed by many generations of Sabbath geese, were packed, sewed into linen sheets; but what appealed to me most was a basketful of goodies. Poppy-seed cakes, cheese cakes, twisted Sabbath bread, a generous portion

of roast goose, and with it all, many admonitions not to eat everything at once.

How hard it was for me to cry, how glad I was when it was all over, and what a sense of freedom possessed me—in spite of the fact that I was packed into the omnibus like a sardine, and that my fellow passengers had no special regard for a little Jewish boy.

I doubt that were I now to fly in an air-ship, I should feel such exaltation, and were I to be chief among the distinguished citizens who ride on some patriotic errand, would I feel anything akin to the pride which then filled me. The higher emotions wipe out the lower differences, and my racial and other enemies seemed like brothers during those last, fast fleeting moments of my boyhood's life.

Good-bye, my brother by vaccination, now a shoemaker's apprentice, passing the omnibus whistling. He stood there with puckered lips, silent for a second; then a smile passed over his dirty face, his brotherly instinct overcame all barriers, he jumped on to the step of the vehicle and shook my hand, saying: "*Z'Boghem*"—"with God."

Good-bye, you son of the *Pany;* you tried to humiliate me when I was king. I knew he, too, would have shaken hands with me; but one of his class has to be careful, and a French governess and social proprieties are higher barriers

than old scores. He nodded his head and smiled, and I thanked him for the smile.

Good-bye, you miller's sons, looking like two huge, penny rolls, leaning against the walls of the mill.

True sons of their Teutonic father, they grasped my hands, leaving huge flour spots on my new suit.

My neighbour in the omnibus scolded, for she, too, had to brush her coat; but what are flour spots compared with warm, fraternal hand-shakes?

"Aufwiedersehn!" the miller's sons called after me. That was what they carved on their sister's tombstone, "Aufwiedersehn."

Ah, Martha! My first, pure love! I shall never forget your kiss or your brother's warm hand-shake.

Good-bye, all ye goose girls, geese and goslings. The earth seemed covered by them.

Good-bye, you Lutheran pastor, who once gave me a glimpse of a Christian's heart and a Christian's vision. He was tightly buttoned, and scarcely nodded his head. I understand it now; it was ministerial dignity.

Good-bye, St. Florian, guarding your huts and stables against fire. You looked neglected, your halo was tarnished and the damp had spotted your saintly robes. Was it because a fire engine had been brought to town?

Good-bye, St. Peter, keeper of the gate of Heaven, with a smile upon your face as if it were all a joke, this locking and unlocking of the abode of bliss. You didn't look as if you would keep a poor Jewish lad out of Heaven.

Good-bye, blessed Virgin Mary, standing upon a crescent moon and a pillar of cloud. You beautiful Jewish mother of the Son of God!

The women in the omnibus said: "Oh! Virgin Mary, intercede for us!" For some reason, the Virgin never appealed to me until in riper years I saw the Sistine in the Dresden gallery. I think I now understand why the women adore her.

Good-bye, faithful old priest; you always looked like a Sphinx to me. Your face was like that of a Cæsar and not of the Christ. You were a Roman and not a Jew. Yet they loved you and you were on your way to make some one's dying easier. I never liked your acolytes—they were always cruel to me, and I ran whenever I saw one. They told me once when they were piled on top of me, that I crucified the Christ and that they beat me "for the love of God."

What a black eye—the first black eye I ever had—I got for "the love of God"! It hurt, though, just as much as if I had got it because of their love for the devil.

Good-bye, you Jewish dead, who lie by the dusty road. My buoyant spirits flagged as I

passed the thorn hedge, beyond which they lay in dire confusion.

Good-bye, old teacher, whom they drew out of the muddy river. They put you closest to the gate and your grave is level with the roadway. It was terrible to lose the love of your wife and have her unfaithful to you. I know now why you despaired. I have read Hosea since, and I understand your grief. It was not because the child was "*Lo ami*"—not my people—that you despaired; but because the people were harlots and did not understand your "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." It isn't easy to have faith at such a time, old teacher, and yet Hosea, in his grief, said: "Come let us return unto the Lord. For He hath torn and He will heal us. He hath smitten and He will bind us up." Too bad we couldn't have read Hosea together.

Good-bye, Adèle, whose grief I shared. Love —I understand it now. Love and not wrath is a consuming fire. All those who love, suffer, especially when love tries to break the barriers of class or race.

Good-bye, old Jewish soldier, you three-quarters of a man, who showed me "Old Glory" and interpreted to me the riddle of the Stars and Stripes. Thanks, many thanks for the patron saint under whose care you put me—"Honest Abe!" The church calendar may not mark his name; but what is a church calendar compared

with the record made by those whose chains he broke, or in whose hearts he inspired the hope that chains *can be* broken?

Good-bye, my father, whom my eyes never saw and my fingers never touched. I could not weep at your grave. How can we miss what we never had? Now, with children of my own, I understand how hard your dying was; how brave your life. Not because you fought for your country, most men are too cowardly to be cowards in time of war; but you went alone where "the pestilence walketh in darkness." You were not afraid of the "terror by night." You may even have been afraid of those guns—I fear them and my children after me. I do not believe you ever killed a Prussian. They may have called you coward, but you were not afraid of the cholera. You comforted the sick and buried the dead, when strong men fled and mere brute strength was unavailing.

I wonder whether you ever struggled as I struggled, whether you suffered just as I suffered. There is no picture of you. I often wished that I could see your features and read in them the story of your inner life. Mother always looked more longingly into my face than into the faces of the other children. They said she spoiled me because I looked like you. Sometimes I think I feel you in me—some one—not quite myself—sometimes many who are not myself—is it you? Is it you,

father, and all the passing generations? Is it a race? Is this the way we live on—in one another? Is this the way we bless or curse the world? I am much I do not wish to be. I do more I do not wish to do. How much am I just myself? How much you? How much this strong, pathetic race to which I belong, against whose ill I have striven, whose good I have not always understood, whose ignominy I have had to share? I tried to run away from that inheritance, father; I did not understand when I rode past your grave that morning in the omnibus—a little boy, packed in among Magyar, Slav, Lutheran and Catholic, who hated me because I was your son.

I have travelled in many an omnibus since. I have seen greater griefs than mine. I now laugh at that pathetic little boy in the omnibus; others will do the same—but although I laugh at that little boy I do not understand. I cannot understand.

One thing you have not left me. One thing which neither you nor your father nor your race nor any one has left me—is hate. If it was ever in me—lurking somewhere—she loved it out of me—your wife, my mother.

XXII

A BACKWARD LOOK

FROM some ancestor, perhaps from my race, I inherited an abnormal sensitiveness. Even as a child I felt instinctively the attitude of people towards me. Consequently, situated as I was in an atmosphere charged with race antagonism, I suffered constantly and often, of course, needlessly. Therefore my childhood seems blurred, as if I were looking at it through a dark cloud, or through eyes misty from tears. Yet there was a bright side to it which should be recalled now, if only in justice to the racial group that composed my close environment.

I never suffered from hunger or cold or from lack of all the affection that my love-hungry nature demanded. If our home had no pictures, my mother's face was beautiful to look upon, and when her blue eyes sought mine I experienced emotions which I recalled vividly in later days, when looking into the face of Murillo's St. Elizabeth. My mother's was that type of maternal face, furrowed early by the pain of widowhood; the eyes were deeply set and overarched by heavy brows. She had a sensitive aquiline nose

and such sweet, well-formed lips that even the loss of her teeth in later years could not disfigure them. She was not what we call an educated woman; for, in her day, girls were not taught anything outside the prayer-book; but she was so cultured that I often wondered where she got her wisdom. The two virtues which she constantly practiced were: contentment and charity. One of her favourite maxims which I remember was: "Never despise those beneath you and never envy those above you."

Although she was brought up in the atmosphere of the Ghetto, when even that was no safe abiding place, and her parents had to bribe officials from week to week to live in peace, her nature had nothing false in it and nothing narrow. While she was a faithful Jewess, she early differentiated between the form of religion and its spirit, discarding many of the ceremonials which seemed to her useless and unethical.

She abhorred the hypocrite but pitied the wayward. She was so pure-minded that I never heard a vulgar word spoken in our family circle, in spite of the fact that we lived in a most realistic atmosphere, surrounded by many immoral men and women. She was a Puritan at heart, never allowing a playing card in the home and very rarely permitting us the use of wine, although it was always in the cellar. Yet with the increasing luxuries of life as they

came to her in later years, she learned to enjoy the beautiful in many forms and yielded to the social demands of the time. She never gossiped or made purely formal calls. She was so busy from morning until night that she could not enjoy leisure when it came, voluntarily assuming the care of grandchildren. When finally her sight failed and she could do nothing, she grieved so because of her enforced idleness that it hastened her death.

My brothers were much older than I, and I did not know them as children. They never permitted me to forget that I was growing up without a father's care, and that they were willing and able to provide all the harsher elements which such care is supposed to afford. No doubt I deserved all they gave me although I am sure I never enjoyed it. I suppose little brothers were made to be tyrannized over by the older ones, especially when the father is not living.

When I say that my older sister was just like my mother I give her ample praise, and when I say that my younger sister was like my brothers, I mean that it took time and better judgment than I had as a child, to appreciate her. Neither she nor her brothers understood their oversensitive relative.

Of none of my kinsfolk and of few among the Jews I knew, had I cause to be ashamed. All my mother's relatives lived in Vienna, which

was our legal home. They were intelligent, industrious people, gentle natures, most of them; too honest to grow very rich and too provident to grow poor. I have already spoken of my father's brother and my grandmother, and fear that I have done them scant justice. From my father's side comes the strong religious strain in us; an almost fanatical sense of righteousness, a great deal of hot, uncontrollable temper, and with it unusual fluency of expression.

The grandmother I referred to I knew only as a bedridden old woman, crippled by rheumatism. She outlived her husband, who left her with four sons, all but one of them dying before she was called to her well-earned rest. She favoured my uncle's children and bequeathed them all her earthly possessions. I have never felt envious; for after all, the things that are worth inheriting from our forefathers cannot be taken from us by will or testament.

Among all the Jews I knew, there were just three whom I should now regard as bad men—they were swindlers and usurers; they committed or were capable of committing perjuries; but every one of them, and their children also, have suffered the consequences. The vast majority were hard-working, honest and scarcely well-to-do people, with a small fringe of very poor and paupers at the social edge; enough to teach the rest the virtue

of charity. Their children, my contemporaries, I meet all the way from Chicago to Constantinople. All of them are good citizens, and some of them occupy large places of usefulness.

As a whole I should say that the Jewish community stood, intellectually, far above the other racial and religious groups; that in the personal virtues, such as chastity and charity, they surpassed them, and that in striking a just balance they certainly were not morally inferior to them.

The unfortunate thing was and still is, that the Gentiles had no understanding of the fine qualities of the Jews and that the Jews never properly appraised the real value of their Gentile neighbours. From my present vantage ground I can see many sinners among all of them, and some saints in each group. Humanly, all of them are so much alike that I can see no difference.

This is what I suppose I felt in my race unconscious days, and when I woke to consciousness, I rebelled against the artificial barriers, suffering much and no doubt causing others to suffer. I was eager to leave home because I supposed that in the larger world there was a larger view of life, and when the driver told us all to get out and walk up the Oresco Hill, I climbed it with joy; for I thought it led to those heights.

XXIII

THE SYNAGOGUE

"BEYOND the hill there are also people" is a German proverb whose meaning is obvious, yet the people "beyond the hill" are strangers and foreigners; here home ends and the world begins. From the hilltop the whole valley lay in panoramic view—the town, the clinging villages, the winding river and the encircling mountains—this was home. I knew each path and roadway; knew, by the sound of the bell, the village and church from which it came; sheep and cattle were of a certain breed; horses were harnessed in a peculiar way; the peasants of each village had their own picturesque style of garment and I knew at a glance each man's habitat. Nobody or nothing was strange to me. The whole valley was home and I felt the gripping sense of homesickness as I viewed it for the last time. I could have embraced it all—yet in only a small spot of that small valley had I moved with any sense of freedom.

Our street was plainly visible from the hilltop. The "*Porte*" or "*Forte*" as it became corrupted—was a gorge-like, bottle-shaped street, the nar-

row end of which was the gate of the Jews, now the toll-gate over which the *Kisbir* presides. Through it came my ancestor, Reb Abraham Bolsover, with a bundle on his back containing sacred books and worldly goods. In the one was his *life*, in the other his *living*, and between barter and the study of God's law his life moved, never without a struggle. When they carried him out of that same street to the God's Acre, they said of him that he died poor in possessions but rich in good works.

Through that gate my father went out at the call of his Fatherland, and when they carried him to his resting-place they made great lamentation. He left to his widow five children—one yet unborn, money enough to keep them from want and a name which always stood for self-sacrifice and devotion.

These ancestors of whom I know, harmed no man and must have done some good; yet they were regarded as aliens and could not move freely beyond a certain boundary. The *Porte* was our home and this diminutive Ghetto shut us in—or shut us out. In later days I discovered that it did both.

I have looked down from many a hilltop since that morning; from the ruins of Athens, the hills of Rome, the mountains round about Jerusalem, the sky-scrapers of the New World metropolis, and I have discovered that one's world, no mat-

ter how large or how small, is full of compartments. Everywhere people shut themselves in and shut others out; they are moved by what they call class-feeling, race-prejudice, religious intolerance; but it is all of a kind, only labelled differently according to the circumstances. The main lines of our divisions were visible from the little hilltop in that little corner of the world and were plowed into the consciousness of the people through hundreds and thousands of years of conflict—and alas! they bore sacred symbols.

The synagogue, with its oriental minarets, was crowded in among the encroaching houses of the Ghetto; the Roman Catholic church, with its severe buttresses, bulbous steeple and shining cross, occupied the centre of the town, dominating the landscape; the Protestant church, with its ugly, square tower, over which a rooster weather-vane indicated the shifting winds, stood at the edge of the town, close to green fields and pastures.

Once my brother by vaccination, wishing to ingratiate himself, told me he believed the Jews were the trunk of the tree, the Catholics were the branches, and the Protestants were the leaves which the wind shook and carried away and scattered. That was good news to me and I rewarded him with a big piece of bread and butter. After it was safe in his grasp he said: "Yes, the Jews are the trunk, but it is old and

decayed, and the Lord has grafted a new tree upon another trunk." Then he ran away as fast as he could, and I hoped that kind Providence would let him stumble and fall; but Providence seemed to be on his side. Nevertheless, that was good news to me—news which no doubt he had heard some time in church. It was a truth which expressed relationship, but it was one of which the synagogue seemed quite unconscious.

Our rabbi's chief function seemed to be, to determine for the housewives whether a pot in which meat had been cooked might still be used if a drop of milk fell into it; whether a goose whose fat leg showed a bruise must be sold to the Gentiles or whether it was *kosher* for the Sabbath meal, and how the rigid rabbinic laws could be circumvented without transgression.

Thus, our Sabbath law forbade all manner of work for us and our servants; but the Gentile servants did light our fires, cook our meals, and sweep our rooms. "Of course," the rabbi said, "the servants have to live—they do it for themselves and not for us—we just eat with them."

On the Sabbath no burden must be carried; but one must have a handkerchief. "Then bind it about your loins and it is part of your apparel."

"Two thousand yards is the distance one may walk on the Sabbath, but if I have to walk four thousand—what then?" "Stop at the two-thousand yard line, put a piece of bread on the

ground and say: 'This is where I live,' then walk two thousand yards more."

Such was the casuistry with which our rabbi's mind was filled. Poor man! he had to spend his time with "annis and cummin," he had to glorify trifles and so minimize the real glory. He had so much to say about rabbi this and rabbi that, and so little of what God said to the seers and prophets.

This was my early quarrel with the synagogue, although at that time I could not express myself. First, it made the traditional ceremonials and observances a law of God. Secondly, it was intolerantly exclusive against those outside its own pale and those within, who saw the larger light. Yet memories crowd upon me whenever I see the synagogue from this hilltop.

The synagogue was at its best on the eve of the Sabbath. Through the rusty iron gate came its Israel, the fathers and sons; the women being busy with the evening meal, the best of the week. Israel looked outwardly renewed. The Sabbath scrubbing was a religious duty; each boy showed its effects in his clean and glowing face, and he was clothed in his best garments.

How unconventionally Israel approaches its God, and how democratically! There is a ceremonial rigidly adhered to, but each man follows it as he pleases, without regard to harmony or order. There are noise and confusion; noble

psalms are mumbled, pious petitions are repeated mechanically and only the Sabbath hymn has melody. It is sung by the reader, but his is no easy task with such an individualistic congregation. Some one cuts short his crescendo, another checks his flight as he approaches the high C, and when he imagines himself near Heaven's gate, a third pulls him to earth by a threefold Amen, five minutes ahead of schedule time.

No one thinks it out of place to discuss the affairs of the day, especially the affairs of some neighbour. Strangers who happen in are weighed in the balance and their moral avoirdupois discussed, as is their fashionable or unfashionable clothing. Business is transacted on Sabbath eve ; but this, of course, *sub rosa*.

Our pew adjoined that of a grain dealer. Hardly had he thrashed his way through the Ninety-fifth Psalm—" Come let us sing unto the Lord "—than he said to his neighbour, who was just catching breath for the Ninety-sixth Psalm : " *Nu*, how was the grain market in Hodowin ?" " God's enemies shall have grain to sell now !" —was the pious answer (business is never unqualifiedly good, to the Jew). Then both hastened through the Ninety-sixth Psalm, a few seconds behind the rest, yet setting a pace to bring them out far ahead, the grain dealer skipping the last lines.

"Will you sell?" he asked. "Sell on the Sabbath?" and then through the Ninety-seventh and Ninety-eighth Psalms without interruption. Here the Twenty-ninth Psalm is repeated. How did I know, how *could* I know, that this is a Psalm in which some great soul saw the glory of Jehovah in nature?

"The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters: the God of Glory thundereth: the Lord *is* upon many waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.

The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests; and in His temple doth every one speak of His glory."

Not a word did I understand. It went over their lips like grain through a threshing-machine, and it was all straw to me. Far more interesting was the fact that, after the Sabbath hymn, six loads of grain changed hands, while the congregation repeated this injunction:

"And the children of Israel shall keep the

Sabbath throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant. Between Me and the children of Israel is a sign forever; for in six days Jehovah made Heaven and Earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed."

The weary service ended, there was no time for gossip; each man and especially the boys hurried home to the Sabbath meal, which, more than its religion, keeps so many faithful to Israel.

Our best room was at its best; the whitest linen covered the table, the brass candle-sticks were burnished, mother had blessed the candles and lighted them, and with her cheery face shining brighter than they shone, she put her hands upon my head, blessing me.

"God make thee like Ephraim and Manasseh;" and while I did not know just why, "like Ephraim and Manasseh," it was a blessing just to feel her hands upon my head. Then with true unction, this High Priestess of Jehovah repeated:

"May the Lord bless thee and keep thee,

May He cause His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee,

May the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Still more sweetly she led us in saying: "For He will give His angels charge over thee, to guard thee in all thy ways. He will guard thy going out and thy coming in, from now and forevermore."

The thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, which then follows, she never repeated nor permitted us to read, for it is the praise of the virtuous woman by her husband, "who praiseth her in the gates." *Her* husband no doubt praised *her* in the Eternal City.

To have given the world the Sabbath is no small achievement for a race, and the Israel I knew kept its rigorous laws and was rewarded by its rich blessings.

The *Porte* was solemnly quiet on Sabbath morning. Every store was closed, although in later days many a merchant could not resist receiving the Gentiles' money over his counter, and quiet business was done behind closed doors. The service of the day began at nine, and the women's gallery was crowded, while a constant chatter was kept up, much to the annoyance of the men, who were glad to be able to blame some one for the disorder.

I remember how indignantly the grain dealer looked up to the gallery and tried to hush the women into silence, on the very morning after he had bought six loads of grain between the repetitions of the Ninety-fifth Psalm and the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy.

The younger men found the encircling gallery very attractive. From it the young girls looked down upon them; eyes met and there were sweet smiles and blushes. There the bride stood, the

first Sabbath after the wedding, and if the bridegroom had brought her from abroad, she was viewed and criticized from all angles; the size of her dowry was commented upon, her looks, her family and her dress; although a large dowry "covered a multitude of sins."

From the gallery mothers watched their restless youngsters, and I can imagine my mother's dear face looking down upon me, often reprovingly. From here they looked with pride upon their sons, called for the first time to read the law, on their thirteenth birthday. This gallery was the Jewish Women's Club; here they discussed in small or large groups the blessings and pains of motherhood, their own and others' griefs; here they pitied the orphan and the widow and comforted one another.

The younger boys were admitted to this gallery during the reading of the law, which seemed very uninteresting to them, for it was all in Hebrew and chanted in a most monotonous way. But that which preceded it was very absorbing indeed; it was the sale, practically an auction, of the privilege of carrying the *Torah*, of "undressing" it, reading small portions of the law, redressing it and returning it to the Ark. These privileges were bought and presented to visitors or any one whom one wished to honour. It was as exciting as any auction sale, only it was all done without a word's being spoken.

Upon a board with movable letters and figures was announced the peculiar part of the ceremony for sale. The price advanced at the raising of a hand or the nodding of a head, and when some rivalry entered into the sale, the whole congregation watched the proceedings with ill-suppressed excitement.

The rabbi, the reader and the dignitaries of the congregation approached the Ark, and that was the one, great, solemn moment. The rich, velvet curtain was drawn aside; the Ark was opened, and the scrolls of the law carried in solemn procession around the synagogue. We children left our pews and crowded close, to kiss the passing scroll.

The white-bearded rabbi looked like one of the priests of old, and I could easily imagine myself in the Temple on Mount Moriah. This solemnity was but momentary; those who had the honour of performing the various ceremonies were called; they pronounced the blessing, quickly and mechanically a portion of the law was read, and then the readers made offerings for various charitable purposes. There is no religious or social function in Israel at which an offering is not made, and gratitude to Jehovah always expresses itself in gifts.

The sermon followed immediately and while old men listened to the expounding of the weighty things of the law, women gossiped,

children in the yard played rather boisterously, and the young men talked about their *affaires d'amour*, much to the hurt of those of us who were old enough to listen and too young to fully understand.

The Sabbath dinner had a peculiar fragrance, and lingers in one's memory more, I fear, than the teachings of the synagogue. The meal was prepared on Friday, and consisted of *Scholeth*. Pork and beans is, to the New England Puritan, what *Scholeth* was to his Jewish prototype.

In huge, black pots, the combination of beans and goose was carried to the communal bake-oven, where for eighteen hours it slowly simmered and baked, and was ready, piping hot, when the morning service was over. The pots were nearly all alike, the owner's name or number being marked in chalk. Once at least it happened that we got the rabbi's *Scholeth*. His wife was reputed a poor housekeeper, and the *Scholeth* proved the fact. When we returned it to its owner we found, much to our dismay, the rabbinic family getting to the bottom of our own.

In the afternoon, mother and I went visiting, usually among the poor and sick, and one of the heritages of those visits is a deep sympathy with human suffering. As I grew older, my uncle took me with him to the weekly discussions of the law, which were held in an anteroom of the synagogue.

I remember two questions which I asked on different occasions. One was, why we were permitted to drink the beer brewed by Gentiles and not the wine which they pressed. The rabbi's reply was, that we were not permitted to drink the wine, because wine is used for social occasions and there would be danger of contact with the Gentiles. When I replied that beer was used for the same purpose, I was told that beer was not brewed in Talmudic times, and consequently could not be forbidden.

In a German translation of the prophets, I had read the first chapter of Isaiah. I felt its vigorous denunciation, I caught its first glimpse of true religion, and when I asked why the rabbi commanded and approved what Isaiah condemned, he told me that the prophetic writings were beneath the law, and that he who kept all the points of the law was greater than they. I never enjoyed these discussions, but now I wish I would have had the patience to sit through them, if only to fasten fully upon my mind one such discussion.

I do remember the stuffy room, for since that time I have sat in it with the new rabbi, who has studied theology in Germany and knows more and preaches less than he believes.

The old rabbi was genuinely orthodox; his Sabbath cap and velvet gown were full of lint and dust; his head was unkempt, for to comb it

would have been labour. He sat in a dilapidated grandfather's chair and before him lay the old Talmud; huge, forbidding looking volumes, a mixture of truth and superstition; a Magna Charta, bills of sale into slavery; wings and chains, the sublime and the ridiculous; but to him every sentence was sacred, every letter inspired of God. Around him sat the pious men of the town and such of their sons as were inclining or being inclined towards the study of the law.

"What did rabbi so and so reply to rabbi this and that?"

Back and forth went questions and answers, like the flying shuttle through woof and warp. It seemed trivial, much of this; but after all, to them those things were vital—more vital certainly than the occupation of their impious neighbours, who spent the Sabbath in idle gossip. Certainly it was more elevating than the way most of their Gentile brethren spent their Sabbaths. They danced, drank, fought and staggered home to beat their wives, or do worse, if they were not married. After all, Israel's Sabbath was Israel's salvation. It ennobled him, kept alive the spiritual, and prevented him from utterly falling a victim to Mammon.

I have no quarrel with the synagogue except this:—that it never revealed to me the *riches* of Judaism. It showed me its beggarly edge, its

vulnerable trivialities, its pathetic pharisaism and its absurd worship of the letter. That Israel had a mission to the world I never knew; that Moses and the prophets were names of which the world took cognizance I never heard; that the Catholic and the Protestant were feeding from the same spiritual sources which fed us was hidden from me, and that we all had "one Father" was never revealed to me.

I surmised all this in my boyish way and I searched for that very thing—through many painful years; but when I discovered it, I had left the synagogue behind me and there is no way back.

XXIV

THE CHURCH WITH THE CROSS

THE cross dominated the landscape; crowning the hilltop stood one, black, austere, forbidding . . . a suffering, emaciated Christ hanging on the tree. Cut out of white limestone, another shone against the dark forest guarding its sylvan mysteries. The cross rose above the river, from the centre pier of the bridge where it vibrated to each shock of the swift rushing stream; at every turn of the road, on the dividing line of orchard and meadow, marking the boundaries of fields and villages, stood the sacred emblem of The Church, itself surmounted by this Roman gallows of beaten gold, proud symbol and sign of victory!

No one ever told me its meaning, yet I soon learned that it was something ominous . . . terrible; and that because of Him who hung upon it *we* suffered and were persecuted.

This I learned by painful experience; for I felt many a lump on my head raised by the benevolent fists of Gentile youth because I would not look at the cross and kiss it. On the other hand, my ears were pulled much too often by my guardian because I *did* look at it. Once I was all

but choked to death because I would not make the sign of the cross, and again was threatened by punishment temporal and eternal, because I carried in my pocket a little crucifix given me by the goose girl in my race-unconscious days. At that time I regarded it as a toy. It never repelled me, although as I now analyze my feelings it was to me a symbol of unforgiveness, something which was angry with me, that I should like to make up with, yet did not dare approach. It was unpleasant to me, not because I suffered bodily harm through it, but because it stood aloof and kept me from enjoying all for which my life hungered. It seemed to say: "This is a Catholic mountain; this is a Christian river, and these fields and meadows, these birds and wild flowers are not for you."

Whenever I passed a cross I seemed to hear the Christ saying: "Get out of here, you little Jewish boy, you crucified Me!" I heard Him say that, because every Catholic I met seemed to be especially angry with me if we met before a crucifix or shrine. Even now when walking along those highways I have the same feeling.

During my childhood I named most of these holy places after some bodily punishment that I received there. Not long ago I sat in the shadow of an acacia grove and saw the crucifix of the "bloody nose," as I called it. I know some beech trees overshadowing a shrine, which I

called the shrine "*Zur Ohrfeige*," a peculiar form of punishment which my countrymen will readily recognize.

Once, when I shared in Christmas exercises, taking the part of Moorish King, as I have already told, and was hurled from my high estate, I received presents and a kiss from the sister of the *Pany*, a woman as saintly as he was wicked. She carried a rosary with an ivory crucifix to church with her and the cross lost much of its terror for me because she was associated with it. Twice, I think, after I took the part of Wise Man, she sent me at Christmas time a present of russet apples; and while she never spoke to me again she smiled at me always when in passing I doffed my cap to her.

There was also a hatter in our town who, it was rumoured, had studied for the priesthood; he too had a share in reconciling me to the crucifix. He was the priest's right hand man, assuming all sorts of parish burdens. On *Corpus Christi* he carried the large crucifix at the head of the procession. This holy day was a peculiarly trying one to the Jewish community, for the Catholic population was enraged when a Jew refused to bare his head as the crucifix passed.

To keep one's head covered and stand erect in the synagogue was regarded by us children as a protest against the Christian faith and prac-

tice; while to share in the Christian worship even by the removal of one's cap, would have been regarded as a most sinful and humiliating act.

The Jews usually drew the shutters, locked the doors and kept out of sight while the procession passed; but I was lured by the music, the gaily coloured banners and by all that in a procession appeals to a boy. I was pushed far to the front and when the head of the procession approached I stood there erect with covered head and immediately became the target for well-aimed blows, which sent my cap flying and threw me violently to the ground. I might have been crushed beneath the feet of the mob had it not been for the hatter, who, shifting the heavy crucifix to one hand and supporting it against his body, stooped, lifted me, led me half around the church and through its open portal; while the bells rang, pious worshippers sang and priests chanted. The good hatter and the crucifix thus became closely identified.

That was the first time I had seen the interior of the church on a festal day. Candles blazed on the altars, banners waved, the organ was reinforced by blaring trombones and huge brass horns; priests and acolytes wore their most splendid vestments, and clouds of incense trailed upward to the loft where pigeons cooed and ventured many a flight around the awestruck congregation.

I am sure that I worshipped; at least I was uplifted; the crude and discordant in my nature seemed to leave me and I felt buoyant as if floating on the air. It was a moment akin to that when, on her death-bed, the miller's daughter passed her wasted fingers through my hair and kissed my hot temples.

Why should I not remember that first, conscious sharing in Christian worship? It brought swift punishment. The acolytes beat me unmercifully and the Jewish lads who saw me going into the church, beside calling me "*Goy*" Christian, told on me, and the consequences may be imagined. Yet I remember the punishment less than the fact that it was my first conscious worship; a real attempt to commune with the Unseen. The mysterious in my own nature had touched the eternal mystery, and the cross had lost much of its aloofness; I had entered its domain.

I do not know what I felt when I saw the golden cross that day from the omnibus; but I was conscious of a reconciliation and perhaps something more. "We are not such strangers after all," I suppose I said to myself. "I don't hate you although I don't quite understand you —but some day I shall."

Perhaps it was merely a youth's resolve to taste the forbidden thing as soon as he escaped his environment—perhaps I have magnified my

feeling, recalling it now in the light of my later experiences. I am fairly positive, however, that I felt a premonition that some day I should enter into whatever experiences the cross held for a human soul. The life which awaited me was favourable to this, and in looking back I can plainly see the guidance of a good Providence.

Far beyond our cross-crowned hill and many another, my new life began. My teachers were Jesuit fathers, the schoolroom was an anteroom to the church and the crucifix was everywhere. The fathers looked very much like the Christ I remembered, painted upon the crosses that dotted our highways; austere and forbidding. They were skilled teachers and splendid disciplinarians. Even my untrained mind was forced into a groove.

There were pages and pages of Latin, curious problems in mathematics and such history as they deigned to give us; but the curriculum consisted largely of Latin, and there are not many questions which the soul can ask when the mind is being drilled in Latin grammar. Living itself began to be a task in which the higher and lower curiously blended; although the unrestrained lower nature threatened ascendency.

Being a Jew, I had to live among my own people, and of course chose so to live. I have slept on harder beds and have eaten coarser fare since then; but I have never felt contrasts more

keenly than when I exchanged home for that boarding-place. It was kept by people who had "seen better days"—a fate they shared with boarding-house keepers the world over.

I had little or no time for social life. The town was totally Slavic and the Jews who lived there were strangers; so I was left much to myself. Most of the students were living with the Fathers, wore clerical attire and were destined for the priesthood. Their pleasures were few. For exercise they walked by classes or in pairs; what they thought or how they lived, I never knew, although I went into the same class-room with many of them. The larger world into which I had entered had even more compartments and smaller ones than the world I had left, and for a good many years I was in a compartment by myself, with no one to share my confidences or to exchange thoughts with me.

My social nature was almost starved, and because those who lived on my level did not take me in, I sought the companionship of those morally and intellectually beneath me and found them ready enough to receive me. What they offered and what I shared I never fully enjoyed. I know that it lowered me and while I never reached the nethermost depths, I went low enough to know something of the humiliation of meeting one's higher nature when one emerges from the abyss.

In such a mood I strolled into a church during my last year in the gymnasium. I had long outgrown my boyhood and was a man in my thoughts, feelings and desires; although less than the man I wished to be. The preacher spoke about sin. I do not remember either the text or the sermon, but I know it was the first time that I felt myself reproved, as if by God. I seemed to see my own soul—a puny, struggling, mean thing and not what I desired it to be. I began to loathe it and myself, and when the preacher offered peace, renewal and pardon to all who would confess and repent, I was sure that my soul's hour had come, that I must set it free and let it grow Godward no matter what the cost to me.

When the congregation knelt, I knelt too and prayed—my own prayer—which had no words, which was just an aspiration Christward. My eyes sought the crucifix in faith, and I was ready to claim its power whatever it was, if it could cleanse me and renew me. I looked at the priest who held it up before the kneeling congregation and saw something strangely familiar in that homely face lighted by the fervour of his faith. It led me back to the village of Deephole. It was Sabbath afternoon; an old man lay voiceless and motionless upon his hard bed because his son was an apostate. Then I could feel the hand of my mother leading me out of that stricken home,

along the fields where poppies and bachelor's buttons grew. How she restrained me from plucking them because it was the Sabbath! I felt as if she were touching my hand as I knelt. She led me past the lighted altar, out of the throng of kneeling worshippers and she seemed to say: "No, not while I am living, my son."

XXV

THE CHURCH WITH THE WEATHER-VANE

THE synagogue and the church with the cross seemed quite unconscious of any change in wind or weather; although our world moved with those trade winds on the sea of time, which the Germans call the *Zeitgeist.*

Not so the church with the gray tower, on whose pinnacle its symbol from the barnyard turned and twisted, but always bravely faced the fiercest winds. To judge from its early history, this lean, long-legged bird was a *fighting* cock. From the time that it was lifted to its exalted position till now, the men above whose temple it "watched for the morning," were fighting men who worshipped in a fighting mood.

On Sunday morning I watched from our doorway the churchgoers who came from many a surrounding mile; Catholics and Protestants, Magyars and Slavs, filling the gray, monotonous street with a riot of colour.

The Magyar peasants wore broad, white linen trousers, shaggy, sheepskin coats and small, rakish hats, always decorated by a sprig of rosemary, placed there by wife and sweetheart, who,

heavy-booted, walked beside them, their full, starched skirts claiming a large part of the sidewalk.

The Slavs were by far more picturesque in their attire. The men wore tight-fitting, blue trousers, braided and embroidered from the knee up to the abbreviated, gorgeous waistcoat, which was always unbuttoned, to allow the still more splendid shirt—the show garment of the Slav—room to display itself. Whether the hat was broad or narrow, chenille braid richly ornamented it to the top, from which hung defiantly, graceful, varicoloured feathers.

The women's clothing outshone the men's, and to even catalogue their elaborately trimmed garments would require a sartorial vocabulary which, unfortunately, I do not possess.

On the whole it was a pageant worth seeing, and I watch it with the same interest from the same doorway whenever I have the good fortune to be at home again.

Besides the riot of colour which attracted me, I very early began my ethnographic studies; for there were variations in dress, which denoted the mountaineer, the man from the valley, the peasant and the mechanic. Each locality had some style of its own, each race, occupation and faith was marked.

Those who went to the church of the weather-

vane were the most soberly attired. Theological divisions were accentuated by the presence or absence of colour, braid and buttons; for there were Puritans among those worshippers. Their forefathers swore fealty to the faith of Calvin rather than that of Luther, and while all of them worshipped in the same church, the historic division was manifested in clothes, if often in nothing else.

Had not clothes marked the churchgoers, I could easily have detected the difference between faiths by facial expression, posture and gait.

The Catholics walked to church rather more reverently than the others. Rosaries hung from the folded hands of the women, who looked neither to the right nor the left, reserving all abandonment to the passions of youth and life until after the services were over.

The Protestants marched like soldiers, their heavy psalm-books clasped to their breasts. Thus fortified, as if by gun or bayonet, they went to the house of God, erect and defiant. Although the generation that I knew never fought for its right to worship according to the dictates of its conscience, its forefathers fought, killed and were killed; while the weather-vane turned on its rusty hinges to face the storms that raged.

The Reformation came with its good and ill to the Carpathians as it came to the Alps, and

it seems strange that the Teutonic Tyrolese submitted to being forcibly rebaptized into the Mother Church, while the more sluggish Slavs fought and retained their faith.

Church historians have taken scant if any notice of these Slavic Protestants, who were as brave as the Huguenots and suffered as much.

There were bishops who forsook mitre and crozier, becoming one with the peasants in suffering imprisonment and martyrdom.

There were priests who followed their example, and, for preaching the new faith, were chained to the block. A group of twenty was sentenced to the galleys and perished miserably at the cruel task.

There were nobles, both men and women, who jeopardized their titles and their lands.

There were peasants innumerable who were wakened out of an age-long slumber and refused to relinquish their freedom in the faith.

The old chronicles of this parish, which but recently fell into my hands, justify my early proclivities for these Protestants. The Chronicle narrates: "The Roman Catholic Bishop, George Barsony, bringing with him a company of Croatians, began forcibly to baptize our members. At the communion, when he placed the wafer on the tongue of the peasant, Stefan Pilarek, the same bit the finger of the Bishop to the bone, and not until the Croatians hit him over the head did

he relinquish his hold. The other members who were about to receive the communion refused to take it; they began to fight; the Croatians opened fire at them, and two were killed. Protestants came from the neighbouring villages and surrounded the house of the priest, where the Bishop lodged. They got hold of him and gave him such a beating that he died from its effects." The Chronicle does not say that they murdered him.

Two regiments of Croatians appeared the next week; the preacher, teacher and sexton were hanged in proper order, while the peasants were broken over the wheel, impaled or quartered. The Chronicle concludes this part of the narrative: "From that time the free exercise of religion ceased in this parish."

Besides their fighting mood and the struggle for liberty which drew me to the Protestants, their sober house of prayer as well as the simplicity and order of their worship, appealed to the Puritan within me, and did not offend my æsthetic feelings.

From the bell-tower I could look down upon the congregation (having bought this privilege from the *mendic*). On the straight-backed benches sat these stiff Puritans, praying with heads erect, singing hymns which had in them the ring of battle. There were no images to offend a mind trained to see in them an insult to Jehovah; no

dark corners or dimly lighted altars to suggest mystery; no incense to artificially arouse the desire for worship. Green fields and acres of swaying poppies and bearded barley were visible from the windows, and when the people sang it seemed to me as if all nature were in tune with their psalmody.

That of which I am now most conscious as having appealed to me was, that I understood every word of the service which floated up to me; and even those broken and stolen snatches were to me the first bits of religion rationally interpreted.

There were certain texts which remained in my memory, and when later in life great social questions pressed for solution, the words that had been so eagerly listened to by the little Jewish boy, hidden in the belfry, came back to the struggling man with promises of hope.

When, finally, on this side the Atlantic, I united with the Protestant Church, no struggle preceded it, no reaction was necessary; mind and soul were merely coming home.

In reality, I have found in the church of the Puritans the best that my race has bequeathed to the world. The prophets and seers are more at home, I think, in the meeting-house than in the synagogue or the cathedral. To me at least, the really great, vital notes of religion which they have struck were not revealed by the rabbi or the

priest; but by the great Puritans, who spoke to me out of English literature and here and there from pulpit and platform.

I cared but little, if at all, for the salvation which Christianity promised or the theology over which it quarrelled.

When Protestantism becomes rabbinical, and when it holds or withholds the keys of Heaven, I shall feel myself as much a stranger to it as I felt to the synagogue or the cathedral. In its cry for righteousuess and personal purity, in its emphasis upon a Christian democracy, in its demand for rational self-sacrifice to achieve great, social ends, it appeals to me and claims my allegiance.

Its creeds, even the most historic, leave me untouched; its sectarian quarrels I cannot comprehend and its dogmatism repels me. When it proclaims the supreme value of the human soul, and demands for it a right to seek its God, unhindered; when it pleads for protection of the child and the woman, and labours for the day when they shall not need protection from a rapacious society; when it struggles to bring to earth the Kingdom of Heaven, I am one with it and am among mine own. Then I hear the voices of my Fathers speaking as they were moved to speak by the Holy Spirit.

I do not wish to imply that I hold lightly the salvation which Christianity offers to the indi-

vidual. It is a goal and a prize worth striving for; but for some reason I have lost the sense of self, at least in these higher reaches of the soul.

When I "got religion," to use a well-worn phrase, I did not want the isolation of a "chosen people," even if, to be a Jew, had meant the plaudits of the world instead of its derision. I did not consider the security of my soul from the pains of Purgatory or the torments of Hell, promised by an infallible church. What I wanted and am fairly confident that I have obtained, was: a fellowship with a God whose chief attributes are social; who, when He revealed Himself to man, made the revelation through His Son, who came to save a world.

Out of all the many confusing interpretations of Christ's teachings, this is clear to me: That He meant to bring together the alienated, to harmonize the discordant, to heal the ancient wounds caused by the mere struggle for self, and that into the world's disorder He intended to bring a new order, which He called: The Kingdom of Heaven.

The most valuable possession which Christianity holds for me is this conviction: That the task is unfinished, that the conflict is still on and that it is my business to invest my life in such a way as to make true the dream of the Son of Man.

XXVI

TOLSTOY THE MAN

AFTER many painful years I discovered that neither religion nor culture has very materially modified racial antagonisms. The years I spent in the gymnasium, sheltered by the arms of the church with the cross, were bearable, only because neither my face nor speech betrayed my racial origin. They were painful years and as they pass through the channels of my mind I realize that it would add little or nothing to the purpose I have in view, should I give a detailed account of them.

I learned my Latin astonishingly well, excelled in history, and lagged frightfully in mathematics. Science there was none, at least none worth mentioning. There were logic and rhetoric in which I did good work. In religion, which dominated the curriculum, I was a sceptic, demoralizing the classes. On the whole, I fear I was a disturbing element; for when I passed my finals and said good-bye to the rector, he muttered: "Praised be the Lord Jesus Christ!"

At the university, where nationalistic lines were closely drawn, I drifted towards the Slavic

groups, forming close and lasting friendships with a number of Russians whose idealism was contagious. They regarded man entirely from the standpoint of humanity, were delightfully impractical, always in debt, smoked cigarettes incessantly, slept until noon, and stayed awake into the morning hours, vehemently discussing everything under the heavens. I owe much to them; above all, my acquaintance with Russian literature and the personal friendship of Tolstoy, who has been the most vital factor in shaping my "*Weltanschauung*."

When I started for Russia on my first pilgrimage, I had not much in my pocket besides the letter of introduction they gave me. I went to see the man who taught religion in terms I understood and which I thought I could accept and practice.

Of my journey there is little to say, except that I travelled a great distance on foot, that I was the recipient of much kindness everywhere and that the peasants shared with me their scant crust and cabbage. I have since tried to find the old woman who gave me some cold potatoes, and who in giving them bestowed more than those who now entertain me at their banqueting tables.

As for the many who offered me hot tea and a bed in the true spirit of charity—ah! if I were rich and could find them all! The only time I wish for money is when I try to repay

kindness; but as our Slavic poor used to say: "*Pan Bogh Zaplatz*"—"God repay you."

So let it be then—God repay you—you Russian sisters who have washed my weary feet and soothed them with mutton tallow; you brother who gave me your place on the cart while you trudged along beside your poor, shaggy horse, as thin and wretched and as kindly looking as yourself.

God repay you, you Jewish innkeeper with whom I pawned my silver watch, who kept it safe for a year or more and would take no usurer's interest.

God repay you, too, you black-eyed, Jewish maidens who smiled at me. God repay you the smile, which was good stimulus for a lonely lad, to whom a kindly look was more even than bread.

God repay you, you Russian matron who took me into your beautiful home and tried to wean me from my "Tolstoy madness" by offering to keep me as tutor for your half savage children.

God bless them all, even the homely kitchen maid who refused to admit me when I knocked at the Count's door, and after giving me a huge piece of black bread told me to "go in peace." I ate the bread but knocked again, and when my letter reached the Countess she came to shield her husband from the intruder.

Yes, God repay you too, you guardian of this genius, standing between him and the world,

which, acting upon his word, would have taken all he was willing to give away. I shall never forget your motherly kindness after I kissed your hand in greeting and you discovered my plight, nor the glorious days I spent under your hospitable roof.

Sometimes I thought you sheltered him too much, that wonderful man—your husband; that you slipped silken underwear beneath the hair shirt he wore, and made soft the hard bed on which he wished to sleep. He would have perished long ago had you not loved him so—and yet, what a death it would have been!

It is easy to glorify those who already wear a halo, and I felt all the emotions which one is likely to experience in the presence of one's ideal; but the final, distinct impression which remained, strengthened rather than weakened by renewed acquaintanceship, was that I had met a man—not a Russian Count or the peasant he tried to be; not a cosmopolitan who has a touch of culture borrowed from the capitals of the world—but a *man* who had thrown off all antagonisms and prejudices, and was able to meet all human beings upon a high and common level.

It was this rare quality in him which enabled me to tell him frankly and honestly all that brought me to him. I do not remember the words I used, I fear they were not simple

enough; but I know that all I told him was absolutely true. That is no credit to me though; for like all truly great personalities he is truth compelling. His remedy for my ills was disappointingly simple; the remedy for the greatest of the world's ills was "in myself."

"Do not repay evil for evil." "Do not hate anybody." "Maintain the dignity of your own personality." "Love everybody, even your enemies." "Give everything and ask nothing in return."

"Am I to set the world right?" I asked him.

"No, not the world, but yourself."

"How shall I know that I am right?" I queried again.

"By living in obedience to the law of God," he answered emphatically.

He read to me the words of Jesus, and for the first time I heard them without theological arrogance or ecclesiastical intonation. He read them, not with the tenderness one associates with the speech of Jesus, but as Moses might have read them from the tablets of stone, or John the Baptist might have preached them before he met Jesus by the Jordan. As a dictator might read the law, so he read the Beatitudes and he laid the same stress upon "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor," as filled his commanding voice when he read those words of Jesus: "But I say unto you love your enemies."

Very decidedly he pressed upon me the necessity of changing my whole attitude towards life, and it was not difficult in that atmosphere to persuade myself that I had changed it. I soon discovered, however, that for me, at least, this was no "once for all" task, but a continual struggle. I found the world always with me, my temper strong, and my passions stronger still; yet I am sure that my view-point had been modified at least, if not changed. I certainly felt my transgressions keenly, my repentance sincere and my conscience more sensitive.

I have tried since under different conditions to work for a permanent change, to reach some high level in which obedience might come without struggle; but that exalted plane I have never reached. The best I can say for myself is, that I left Tolstoy with less faith in the materialistic philosophy with which I had become inoculated, that I trusted less the things which can be demonstrated by touch or sight and that I felt a faint touch of the power of the spiritual.

This early acquaintance with Tolstoy helped me to understand rationally the doctrine of the New Birth which I have so often heard expounded since.

While Tolstoy's rationalism forbade him to speak of his experience in terms of mysticism, the change which had taken place in him was fundamental, and Lyoff Tolstoy, the follower of

the Man of Nazareth, was a totally different man from Count Tolstoy; nobleman, soldier, courtier and author.

I coveted the experience which brings about such results and I believe that it is not only rational but essential to an entrance into true discipleship with the Master. I know something of the pangs and pains of this new birth, this attempt to like the unlike, to love the unlovely, to regard wealth, place, honour, of no import, and to believe that the purpose of life is to do God's will.

This conscious substitution of the "*Alter*" for the "*Ego*" is no light achievement, and but few men win victory in the struggle as calmly and serenely as did my host and teacher. Yet I am sure that the most valuable lesson I learned then and have since relearned from the same teacher is, that national and racial divisions are much more superficial than my professors in the university led me to believe.

"Alles ist Rasse" was the note which dominated the teaching of History in all its multitudinous divisions. I sometimes think that the opposite is true and that there is nothing in race; for I have experienced oneness with all sorts of people, both in the lower and the higher spheres of our nature.

This latter theory Tolstoy dogmatically affirmed. "You are a Jew, you say," and he would grasp my arm so tightly that I could feel the puls-

ing blood in his sensitive hands. "I am a Russian; yet I feel no difference in the touch of your hands, in the look of your eyes, and hear none as you speak to me. There are differences in the colour of the skin, the shape of the nose and eyes, but beneath the surface we are all alike."

So far as I know, Tolstoy has not changed these views, but I doubt that even the man who alters his view-point often has changed in that one fundamental belief.

To me this oneness of all men has become a conviction, the one religious doctrine which I hold with a scientific dogmatism; for I know Chinamen, whose slanting eyes do not prevent them from seeing the world just as I see it; Hindoos who, removed from their imprisoning system of caste, take this human view of man. I have met Japanese the travail of whose soul is akin to mine, and Negroes whose souls are so white that one might envy them their purity.

Knowing every shade of Slav, Teuton and Latin, the Aryan and Semitic peoples, I have found them all alike at their best and at their worst. Dissimilar they are in their various environments, reflecting all the differences of climate, food, religion and government; but let them climb the heights to which the soul aspires or let them sink to the level to which fleshly lust drags them, and they are brother angels or brother brutes.

Yes, one other thing I learned from Tolstoy and learned repeatedly; it is, perhaps, of more value than all the other things he taught me. It was the initial lesson and the hardest. "Give everything and ask nothing in return."

I have ceased to demand brotherhood or even to expect it. I am giving it, and that is often hard. To yield to every man the fraternal feeling is even harder, I think, than it is not to feel slighted or hurt when one is left out; but even that is difficult enough. When one has finally yielded himself to all men of all races and classes, when one can be unconscious of hampering barriers between, when one does not feel anything but pity for the tainted, a desire to include the halt and the halting rather than to exclude them, then one has reached the highest point of spiritual experience. Towards that point I am travelling, and repeatedly that which has buoyed me has been Tolstoy's words as he pressed my hand at every good-bye.

"Young man, you can't make this world right unless *you* are right." "The kingdom of God must be within *you*, if you want to hasten its coming into the world." "Give everything and ask nothing in return."

XXVII

AWAKENED JUDAISM

WHEN I saw fifty lifeless bodies of men, women and children, beaten into pulp, lying in a heap on the floor of the synagogue in Kishineff, I said to myself, "Blood is thicker than water"; for my breast laboured and I wept for the "slain of the daughter of my people." But I felt these pangs no less when I saw three times as many native Russian youth put to death by fierce Kosaks as in their untamed fury they slew all who obstructed their path. I have felt the same terrible emotions when I tried to comfort Polish and Lithuanian women, who mourned over the shapeless bodies of their husbands and sons, mutilated by falling rock and burned by fierce fires.

I have watched by the bedsides of the dying of many races and have tried to guide the souls of men into some secure haven, feeling for *all* that deep compassion which a brother's heart alone can feel.

For the coarse, blatant Jew or Jewess, who offends against good taste at summer resorts in America, I have the same feeling of pity, bordering on contempt, that I have for the strident, ir-

reverent, sharp-voiced Yankee who disturbs the quiet of picture galleries and cathedrals in Europe, and is *persona non grata* with all thoughtful travellers. I feel for all those who offend by accentuating or ridiculing race peculiarities, and am no less repelled by the vulgar caricature of the stage Irishman than by that of the Jew or the Italian.

I have long been protesting by voice and pen against the categoric judgment passed upon races, and feel keenly for the child, whether it is called in derision, "Nigger," "Sheeny," or "Dago." In the steerage, the mine, and on the playground, I have stood between the bully and his victim, never asking which was Jew or which Gentile, and have tried to defend every "underdog," no matter what his pedigree.

I count my friends among all races and classes, those nearest and dearest to me often being racially and historically farthest removed. A classmate with whom I could discuss the problems of Hebrew grammar most profitably, was a full-blooded Negro, and at a recent Student Conference I found a Chinaman of a certain group most responsive to my proffer of friendship.

For twenty years my work has brought me in constant contact with people of New England lineage; while among my hospitable hosts have been truly cultured Bostonians, the elect of society in the "City of Brotherly Love," the most

refined and the richest in New York, and people of all nationalities in Ghettos and slums.

There came a time, however, when, in spite of my cosmopolitan nature, I felt pride of race—felt the spirit of Israel within me ; and this feeling was awakened by one who, like myself, had struggled against the current, but made for himself a permanent place in the history of the Jewish race.

When first I saw this prince among men, Theodore Herzl, he stood head and shoulders above his brethren, like Saul among the sons of Kish. Around him surged a mass of enthusiastic men who hailed him as the New Moses to lead them out of their manifold captivities. Banners of blue and white were waving wildly, and the double triangle, the shield of David, was everywhere ; over the speaker's desk, around the crowded gallery, on souvenir postal cards and decorating the cigarettes which the Russian delegates smoked continually.

Jews had gathered from "every nation under Heaven." For an hour they waved flags and shouted their huzzas ! hurrahs ! and elyens ! in a dozen languages. They broke through the cordon of ushers and carried Theodore Herzl upon their shoulders, up and down the great hall, until their frenzy of delight had exhausted itself. Then the founder of the Zionistic Movement began to speak. I quote a part of what he said :

"This century, through its technical achievements, has brought us among other things a splendid renaissance. But this magic progress has not been used for the humanizing of society. Although distances have been annihilated, we are still tortured by the miseries of great numbers of our brothers crowded into small space.

"In giant steamers, swiftly and without danger, we cross unknown seas; railroads carry us safely into mountains, which formerly we hesitated to climb. Events that happened in countries not yet discovered when the Jews were locked into Ghettos, are now made known to us the next hour.

"The Jewish problem, therefore, is an anachronism, and that, not because a hundred years ago there was a time of enlightenment which in reality existed for only a few noble souls.

"I do not believe that electricity was discovered to enable some snobs to illuminate their drawing-rooms, but that by its light we may solve the problems of humanity. One of them, and that not the least important, is the Jewish question. In solving it, we do not act for ourselves only, but for many others who are 'weary and heavy laden.'

"That the Jewish question exists, it would be folly to deny, and it is most difficult where there are the most Jews. Look at France or even England, where the poor Jews have carried anti-Semitism, as they are now carrying it to America.

"I think I understand this anti-Semitism. In is a complicated movement which I look upon from the standpoint of a Jew, yet without fear or hate. I think I recognize its component parts: A coarse joke, common commercial envy, inherited prejudice, religious intolerance and that which professes to be self-protection.

"I do not regard the Jewish question as a social or a religious one. It is a national problem, and to solve it, we must make it, first of all, a political world question whose solution must come through councils of all the civilized nations; for we are a nation! A nation!"

Many a time I have felt the lashing of emotions roused against the encumbering flesh; but never before as then, when thousands and thousands of men took up the cry: "We are a nation! A nation!"

What a tumult it was! A nation was born again and this was its parliament, ultimately to convene in its own Jerusalem, its historic centre and rightful home. Millions all over the scattered Jewries had their hopes awakened, and thought to see them realized in a not far distant future.

It was my privilege to know Theodore Herzl most intimately. He was a frequent guest in the Vienna home of my brother, who was one of his most trusted lieutenants.

After that Pentecost at Basel I saw the

development of the Zionistic Movement from behind the scenes. I should like to say here that the largeness of Dr. Herzl speaks in the fact that when he was told of my changed religious and social views, he nevertheless took me into his confidence and shared with me his innermost thoughts.

Personally, he was one of the most charming men I have ever met. His presence was regal, and the rulers of great empires, recognizing in him the "stuff" of which they were made, treated him with consideration and respect. His cultural achievements were not superficial, in spite of the fact that he was extremely versatile; his literary style was brilliant, yet subdued, and he lacked utterly that assertiveness which too often characterizes the Jew.

His features were sensitive yet firm; as if cut from finest marble. He possessed in a large degree that quality so rare in leaders—disinterestedness, and he viewed the Zionistic Movement from an impersonal standpoint. He was a straightforward, honest soul, without guile, and those who assisted him by their talents and means had to do it "*für die Sache*," and not for any prize which he held out to them. Consequently, he gathered about himself great, apostolic spirits, in which Judaism, fortunately, is not entirely lacking.

Zionism—that is, a Jewish state, preferably in

Palestine—as a solution of the Jewish problem, came to him after years of keen, personal suffering which were part of the problem.

He was a Jew in spite of the fact that he was a patriotic Austrian; a Jew, although he interpreted current events for the Gentile readers of the *Neüe Freie Presse*, which is undeniably one of the most influential German newspapers in the world; a Jew, although the faith of his fathers was only a memory, and, as he told me, he had struggled with the problem of race inheritance much as I had.

This is the way he put the case, speaking to his world-wide audience.

"We have honestly tried, everywhere, to lose ourselves in the people among whom we lived, and have asked only that we might retain the faith of our Fathers. That, however, is not permitted.

"In vain are we loyal, and in many cases, overenthusiastic patriots; in vain do we bring the same sacrifices which our fellow citizens offer; in vain do we endeavour to increase the fame of our Fatherland in art, science, trade and commerce. In every country where we have lived through many centuries, we are regarded as strangers, often even by those whose forefathers were not yet in the land when ours had long agonized and toiled for it.

"Only the majority can decide who in a

country are the strangers, and it is a question decided by force. I yield none of our rights when I say that in the present condition of this world, might goes before right. In vain, therefore, are we brave patriots, even like the Huguenots who were forced to emigrate. If our enemies would only leave us alone; but they will not.

"We have proved that we cannot be annihilated by oppression and persecution. Those means have won only our weaker brethren—the strong returned bravely to their people."

This last phrase left its barb in my conscience and I struggle with it still. Is there a way which leads from the large human consciousness back to the narrow confines of race or tribe? Can I wipe out of my experience changes which seem to have affected the very cells and nerves out of which my body is fashioned?

In a new way I have asked the Nicodemus question—"Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

"The strong returned bravely to their people." Yes, I am one with the Jew. My heart leaps to him when he is down—hated, ridiculed, or forced to begin again the age-long march which has no ending—but it shrinks from him when he is up, and the other man, whoever he be, is held down by cunning, strength, or whatever the weapon may be.

I am not afraid to share his ignominy. I am

not running away from all those subtle cruelties practiced by society against him—for where the Jew is not welcome I do not care to go. And yet I cannot give up this liberating sense of kinship with all the human—not only with the ruling race or type but with all humanity.

Those who know anything about me know that I have not only preached this doctrine of the brotherhood of man dogmatically but that I have practiced it, and have suffered the consequences.

I cannot give up the name "Christian," I cannot return to Judaism, although it betray weakness or even cowardice.

I feel myself born again, and I cannot undo so vital an experience unless I am overwhelmed by some great moral catastrophe.

Christianity is to me the real internationalism in which all the races and nations are one or are growing into oneness. In it the individual casts off that which is specific to his race, he becomes one with all men, and therefore one with the divine in them.

In this experience he rids himself of those great sins, prejudice and pride of race, and receives the blessing in store for those who believe and practice the teachings of the "*Son of Man.*"

It is difficult of course to say what would have been my view-point had I met Theodore Herzl twenty or more years ago. I might have re-

turned bravely "to my people." But when one meets Jesus of Nazareth there is no way back; there are new marching orders, and they call "Forward."

Theodore Herzl returned to *his people* because the *other people* did not want him.

I cannot return, whether the *other people* reciprocate my feeling for them or not.

Into my sphere of relationship no rebuff nor insult can enter; because I ask nothing for myself; while for the other man, whether he be Jew or Gentile, I ask only that he shall have the opportunity to earn the respect of his fellow men, regardless of the faults of his race.

XXVIII

CONCLUSION

WHAT has my own race bequeathed to me? What do I owe to Slav, Magyar, German and Anglo-Saxon? What has the synagogue done for me, what the church with the cross, or the church with the weather-vane?

From somewhere I have a passion for the human. Shall I say this is Jewish?

I saw that passion demonstrated in my Jewish teacher, whose grave is level with the ground in the old God's Acre; I believe that the Slavic candy-maker—the by-product of whose trade and the remnants of whose library I purchased—possessed it. I believe it shone out of the face of the *Pany's* sister, who kissed my blackened cheeks and put russet apples into my trousers' pockets; the Lutheran pastor preached and lived it in his narrow environment. I have faith to believe that the Jesuit fathers and German savants had it, hidden behind pious phrases or bold rationalistic utterances.

Perhaps my race bequeathed this love of humanity to the rest of the human race; even then it proves that for which I am contending: That

all a race or family can leave to its progeny which is worth inheriting, is not in the cell or nerve or blood, but is what is cast upon the waters of life, of which "whosoever will may come and drink freely."

The sons of the prophets develop into the sons of Belial, and a poor, ignorant villager's child ministers in the true spirit before Jehovah's altar.

"Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father!" cries the indignant John. "For I say unto you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." This is the great tragedy of races, nations and families; yet it is the great comfort of the outcast, the oppressed, the burdened and the heavy laden.

What else have I that is specifically Jewish? What shines from my eyes or manifests itself in gait and gesture, I do not know. Many of my characteristics, no doubt, are betrayed in these pages which are a frank revelation of my younger self.

I have no passion for barter or money; I am invariably worsted in a bargain and always accept unquestioningly the wage offered me. But even were I a Shylock, a veritable Shakespearean Jew, and worse, if that is possible, I could point to men of other races not unlike him.

I know very intimately men and women of many races who profess the Christian faith, yet

love barter more than prayer and mammon more than God; who preach or teach or write, "for revenue only," and never for the glory of God; and who tenaciously hold to the letter of their contract, even to the cutting out of the very heart of their unfortunate victims.

Perhaps one of my Jewish traits is that I cannot hide my faults. What few virtues I may possess, I trust I do not flaunt in the market-places.

I have tried to be humble in this New World environment, so garish and loud; which trumpets from the housetop the things that have been "spoken in the closet"; which "makes broad its phylacteries" and writes all about their length and breadth and cost in the society columns of our daily press.

The Christian virtue of humility is hard to practice in a land controlled by the publicist; a land in which the advertising value of a thing is regarded more highly than the thing itself.

If there are shreds of good in me, it is because by the grace of God (using that old phrase without cant) I have always met good people among the different races with whom my lot has been cast. I do not recall a single man, even those I have met in jails, penitentiaries, dives and gambling hells, who has retarded any progress towards the good that I cared to make. I could fill twice the number of pages I have written, re-

cording the names and deeds of those who have inspired me to lead the better life.

Nor have I ever met a woman (and I have met women close to the bottomless pit) who ever used the art of her sex in an effort to drag me down; but I know very many women whose whole being radiates purity and in whose presence one cannot help being a man. I have never met a woman before whom I could not lift my hat in deference; and this feeling of reverence for womanhood I owe in large degree to my mother and my wife.

Within me are all possibilities of good and evil, and everything that lies between; yet these same tendencies I have found in other men of other races. Never all the good nor all the evil in any one man or any one race.

Every individual I know is an intricate and unfinished piece of curiously constructed mechanism in body and spirit; linked to the past, yet free to the shaping forces of each fleeting moment; never completed, never perfected, never, I hope, so totally ruined but that love can redeem it, and "set it again upon a rock and establish its going."

I am a debtor to all the races that in varying degrees influenced my life during its most impressionable period.

From the Slav, I have a love for physical labour and a sense of its dignity.

The Magyar has given me a feeling for "the mere pleasure of living"; although I have never quite been able to abandon myself to it.

In the sphere of my intellect, I am Germanic. My mother tongue is German, as are my passion for intellectual freedom and my impatience with its restraint; while the inward look, which so easily leads to despair, bears the German stamp.

I came to America early enough in life to catch the passion for liberty and the love of democracy; but too late to be anything but an impractical idealist to whom "life is more than meat," and human history more than a succession of economic facts.

I have not written an autobiography, or desired to write one; that would have been presumptuous; nor have I written a bit of purposeless fiction with which to burden the book-market; that folly I would not commit. I have honestly recorded certain influences which shaped the life of a child until youth, and I leave all deductions to my patient readers. Yet I should like to point out in which direction the most valuable lessons of my experience lie. I believe they are:

First, that racial characteristics are largely determined by environment.

Second, that race prejudice is an artificial product of the mind, induced by various influences.

Third, that in the highest and lowest spheres of thought and activity, all races are alike.

Fourth, that every human being, no matter what his colour, race, faith or class, has a right to earn the respect of his neighbour and his community, by virtue of *what he himself is.*

Fifth, that the brotherhood of man will become an established fact as soon as each man determines to live like a brother in his relation to his fellows.

Sixth, that Christianity has in its *spirit* the solution of class and race problems; but that in its *practice* it is lamentably far from solving them.

Seventh, that he who wishes to enter into fellowship with the nation or race with which he lives must free himself from all isolating practices and beliefs.

Eighth, that entrance into such a large human relationship has to be "bought with a price" and that it is a price worth paying; for there is no loftier human experience than that of becoming one with all mankind.

To those who do not consider a book worth reading, unless it "ends well," let me say this: If a good fairy were to come from the fairy-land of my childhood (of course I had a fairy-land) and were to ask me, as she always asked the children in the stories I used to read, that I make three wishes, and she would grant them

all, I could make but one wish. Not for wealth, although I could use it; not for strength, although I need it; not for wisdom, although I lack it. My one wish, and this the fairies cannot grant me, would be, that I may have grace given me to be a man to the end, and to the end, love my brother man with all the passion of my soul.

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